



# Types of Technology in Aged Care: Telehealth

Aged care services are increasingly embracing innovative digital technologies to improve the care experiences of older people and to enable care workers to do more, even with fewer resources (e.g., staff, financial). This information sheet on telehealth is part of a series covering types of technology currently used in aged care. These information sheets are available on the [ARIIA website](#).

## What is telehealth?

Telehealth refers to the delivery of remote healthcare using telecommunication technology to transmit audio, image, and/or data between a patient and a healthcare provider (such as a general practitioner or a specialist). [1] Many healthcare providers offer these consultations when a physical examination is not needed. [2]

The use of telehealth has grown exponentially since the COVID-19 pandemic and is frequently used in residential aged care to allow residents to maintain a relationship with their usual GP who is aware of their medical history, medications, goals of care, and advance care directives. [3]



## How is telehealth used in aged care?

In aged care, telehealth can be used to support remote medical consultations with healthcare professionals, provide ongoing remote monitoring with the support of wearable technology, and support mental health and medication management. [4]

Telehealth should be used to support and complement face-to-face consultations. However, aged care telehealth technologies should not be used to save costs or purely for convenience as the long-term safety of older adults may be compromised. [5] It should be considered that not all older people will have the sufficient skills to access and use the technology and may need support for telehealth to be successful.

## How can telehealth benefit the aged care sector?

Telehealth can improve the access older people have to healthcare by allowing them to access speciality appointments without leaving their usual place of residence. Telehealth technology can reduce travel time for older adults living in the community, and during the COVID-19 pandemic telehealth was used to keep older adults safe and avoid exposure to the virus. [6]

The integration of telehealth technologies can reduce healthcare costs by reducing travel costs, appointment frequency, and potentially preventing inappropriate hospital admissions. Telehealth services can prompt increased communication between healthcare providers, aged care workers, older people, and their families, and improve healthcare outcomes for older adults with chronic conditions. [7]

## Examples of telehealth in aged care

Technologies that support telehealth include:

- **ProEX:** The ProEx desktop and mobile device supports secure video calls and with multiple users in telehealth video consultations worldwide.
- **Skype:** A free platform that allows individuals to make phone calls, host or join video conferences, and send and receive instant messages in one-on-one or group chats.
- **Zoom:** A free platform that connects people, engages new audiences, and can be used to support telehealth.





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### References

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[www.ariia.org.au](http://www.ariia.org.au)

For more information email [ariia@ariia.org.au](mailto:ariia@ariia.org.au) or call 08 7421 9134

ARIIA - Level 2, Tonsley Hub, South Rd, Tonsley SA 5042

ARIIA was established as an independent, not-for-profit organisation, set up to lead the advancement of the aged care workforce capability by promoting and facilitating innovation and research to improve the quality of aged care for all Australians.

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