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# Challenges in Addressing the Evolving Opioid Crisis During COVID-19



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# Challenges in Addressing the Evolving Opioid Crisis During COVID-19

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Presented by the faculty of **Weitzman ECHO**



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## Initial Attempts

- Reimbursement – Telephone/Video Visits
- Extending prescriptions
- Halting toxicology screens
- Telephone outreach
- Care Coordinators
- No more groups, only individual sessions



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## Challenges

- Deterioration of care
  - Increased relapses and non-fatal overdoses
  - Inadequacy of telephone compared to in-person
    - Digital divide
    - For medical/nursing/especially behavioral health
- Loss of our group support
  - Realization of importance for many patients
- Loss of external 12-step recovery groups
  - Some may not have telehealth
- Loss higher level of care (IOP)
  - Connection to care put on hold



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## Challenges

- Inductions
  - Decreased access
  - Regulatory guidelines
- Connecting patients to behavioral health
- Staff Burnout
  - Shift to telehealth
  - Evolving regulations/procedures
  - Social unrest
  - Employee wellness/mental health

 

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## Patient Challenges

- Attempt to do more in-person visits
  - Fear and anxiety from patients to go in person
- Privacy/confidentiality concerns with telehealth
- Some people completely isolated
  - Loss of access to soup kitchens, jobs, stress over income, staying at home
  - Delayed social services
- **Chat Discussion Question – Please Share!**
  - What supports did your patients lose due to COVID-19?
  - What supports did they gain due to COVID-19?

 

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## Response

- Reinstate some toxicology screens
  - Drive-up/parking lot saliva testing
  - Minimal urine toxicology screens in-person
  - Keeping conversations honest
- Minimal nursing visits in-person
  - Getting a better “read” on patients
- Attempts to try tele-video groups
  - Unsuccessful to date
- Targeted outreach
  - Overdose prevention



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# Thank You!

Today’s panel is from Weitzman ECHO MAT, a monthly videoconference education program for prescribers and care teams.

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For more information or to register to observe a session please visit:

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