

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

# Advancing Tech-Enabled Health and Home Care

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The previously sharp lines between brick-and-mortar health care and home care are blurring, enabled by shifts to virtual care and the rapid expansion of telehealth during the COVID-19 pandemic. With an expanding body of evidence supporting home-based care models, new approaches have emerged where care in the home, previously narrowly conceived as traditional home health services, is integrated with health care and exists on a spectrum that considers patients' fluctuating needs over time. Projections estimate that up to \$250 billion in US health-care spending could shift to virtual care.<sup>1</sup> However, the virtual-care ecosystem remains challenged by many factors, including inconsistencies with the traditional home-care delivery system, a lack of financial incentives to care for patients in the home, and decentralized technology platforms that are ill-equipped to integrate into complex health systems.

Recognizing the growing demand for virtual care, data supporting home-based and alternative care-delivery models, the rapid expansion of telehealth, and the potential to advance health equity, the Milken Institute Center for the Future of Aging (Center) launched the Advancing Tech-Enabled Health and Home Care Project in 2021. The Center convened an expert group of stakeholders representing health care, technology, government and policy, research and academia, philanthropy, advocacy, and community-based organizations to develop solutions to advance tech-enabled care. Based on perspectives from expert interviews, a half-day roundtable, and a follow-up survey, this report presents actionable recommendations around three of the most promising opportunities to integrate health and home care through technology:

- Pandemic-related and larger-scale policy and program design changes to expand the availability of care in the home through technology;
- Practices and policies to create an optimal care environment, foster greater alignment of programs, and drive integration within the virtual care ecosystem; and
- Collaboration and coordination to accelerate efforts.

## Opportunities Overview

Experts focused on policy and systems change and collaborative strategies to accelerate and scale the integration of tech-enabled health and home care. Three consensus-built opportunities emerged:

## **Opportunity 1: Policy changes to facilitate and support tech-enabled care and address barriers to expansion**

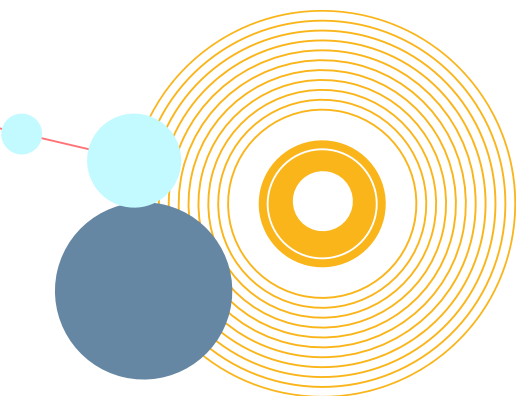
- Roundtable participants recommended the extension of core telehealth and home-care flexibilities implemented during the public health emergency to enable further evaluation of cost and quality and the development of requirements and guidelines on appropriate use. These extensions include the lifting of geographic and originating site restrictions under traditional Medicare, providing telehealth access for beneficiaries in their homes and regardless of their location.
- Other critical public-health emergency-related provisions to prioritize for extension include access to audio-only telehealth services, the three-day rule waiver for skilled nursing facilities, and the continuation of the [Acute Hospital Care at Home](#) initiative.
- In addition to the extension of flexibilities, larger-scale policy and program design changes are critical to further integration of health and home care through technology. Experts highlighted opportunities to expand value-based payment models, in particular:
  - Enabling risk adjustment for a variety of virtual modalities and not just synchronous audio-video appointments,
  - Identifying ways to integrate episode-based and population-based payment models that smooth transitions in services linked to changes in a person's acuity, and
  - Supporting the participation of home-based care providers in value-based care.

## **Opportunity 2: Development of a systems approach that integrates health and home care to bridge gaps and bolster equity**

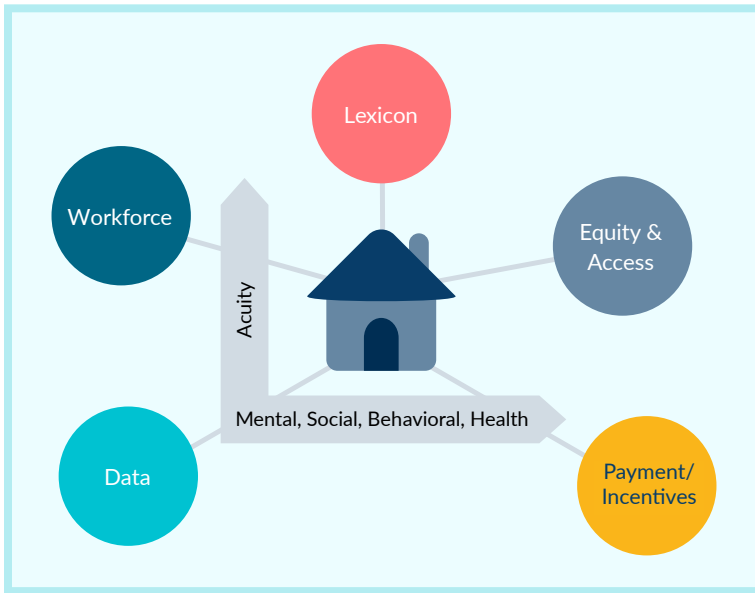
- As the guardrails for virtual care are developed for the traditional home setting, senior housing settings and other alternative care sites offer critical opportunities to test integrated care models at scale.
- Open-source data sharing strategies would align further efforts between home-care providers and traditional health-care settings, including: expanding interoperability requirements, developing application programming interfaces for home care and community-based providers, and bolstering collaborative data practices for longitudinal management across care teams.

## **Opportunity 3: Collaboration and coordination to accelerate efforts**

- Across sectors, collaborative approaches and overarching strategies that facilitate coordination among stakeholders in this complex environment must be implemented. A coordinated plan for integrating health and home care through technology could replicate the structure and framework of the National Alzheimer's Project Act (NAPA)<sup>2</sup> and other national plans, such as the Recognize, Assist, Include, Support, and Engage (RAISE) Family Caregivers Act<sup>3</sup>, to provide a platform for connecting and coordinating issues, stakeholders, and strategies.
- The Center recommends a national plan to drive progress on tech-enabled care that would include five key elements: establish a common lexicon, advance digital equity and access, build the case through data, address workforce challenges, and develop and scale payment models and incentives.



# Key Elements of National Plan to Advance Tech-Enabled Health and Home Care



Source: Milken Institute (2022)

View the full report at <https://milkeninstitute.org/report/tech-enabled-health-home-care>

## Endnotes

1. Oleg Bestsenyy et al., *Telehealth: A Quarter Trillion-Dollar Post-COVID-19 Reality?* (McKinsey & Company, May 2021), <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/healthcare-systems-and-services/our-insights/telehealth-a-quarter-trillion-dollar-post-covid-19-reality>.
2. “NAPA—National Alzheimer’s Project Act,” Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, accessed February 28, 2022, <https://aspe.hhs.gov/collaborations-committees-advisory-groups/napa>.
3. “RAISE Family Caregiving Advisory Council,” Administration for Community Living, accessed February 28, 2022, <https://acl.gov/programs/support-caregivers/raise-family-caregiving-advisory-council>.