Telemedicine Allows Southeast Georgia Physician Associates to Deliver Safe, Effective Care during Coronavirus Outbreak

BRUNSWICK, Georgia: March 27, 2020 – Seeing a doctor without leaving the comfort of your home is convenient any time of year. During the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, it's absolutely vital to public health and safety. “Our goal is to give patients access to care as much as possible during the COVID-19 pandemic. Telemedicine helps us achieve that goal,” says Adam Brown, CMPE, director of Physician Practices at Southeast Georgia Physician Associates.

Similar to Skype or FaceTime, a telemedicine video call allows health care providers to see and speak to a patient outside of the doctor’s office. The Health System uses the Doxy.me telehealth system. To participate, a patient must have a good WiFi signal and access to a computer, smartphone or tablet with a camera and microphone.

“While not all medical specialties are able to use telemedicine, many routine sick, follow-up and well visits can be conducted this way. We are increasing our telemedicine capabilities and using this technology as much as possible during this pandemic. Our telehealth system is invaluable to help us contain the spread of coronavirus and protect our community,” Brown explains.

The Health System first began using telemedicine in 2015, in partnership with the Coastal Community Health network which includes Baptist Health in Jacksonville and Wolfson Children’s Hospital.

Other than having a virtual instead of an in person appointment, the interaction between provider and patient remains the same. The Health System adheres to strict protocols to protect patient privacy during video calls, and health care providers document issues discussed during the video visit just as they would during a regular office visit. Typically, the cost of a video or telehealth visit is the same as an in-person visit. Some insurance companies are waiving co-payments and co-insurance for telehealth visits during the coronavirus outbreak. Patients may still receive a bill for any balance due from their appointment.

—more—
Older adults are especially vulnerable to coronavirus but may not have the necessary technology or knowledge to use telemedicine. “We urge family, friends and neighbors to offer a helping hand to older adults at this time. Our close-knit community always comes together during difficult times and coronavirus is no exception,” Brown says.

To find out if your medical or health issue can be addressed with a telemedicine video call, please contact your health care provider.

**ABOUT SOUTHEAST GEORGIA HEALTH SYSTEM**

Southeast Georgia Health System is a not-for-profit health system comprised of two acute care hospitals, two long term care facilities, three immediate care centers, five family medicine centers and numerous employed physician practices. The Health System has multiple outpatient specialty care centers, including the only CyberKnife® M6 Program in Georgia, and a Cancer Care Center accredited by the American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer. The Health System is part of Coastal Community Health, a regional affiliation between Baptist Health and Southeast Georgia Health System forming a highly integrated hospital network focused on significant initiatives designed to enhance the quality and value of care provided to our contiguous communities. For more information, visit [sghs.org](http://sghs.org).

###