SUBURBAN
HOME HEALTH CARE

LOCATION: BOSTON, US

MIT Sloan MANAGEMENT

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PROJECT GOAL

Evaluate effectiveness of Suburban Home Health Care's telehealth program & Provide recommendations to its virtual care model

PROBLEM STATEMENT

PS1

Identify major patient behavior changes during the COVID-19 pandemic

PS2

Evaluate the effectiveness of the **SHHC's virtual care telehealth model**

PS3

Propose solutions to address any patients and clinician experience gaps in SHHC's virtual care model

METHODOLOGY

PRIMARY RESEARCH

Literature Research:
- Impact of pandemic on telehealth
- Uptake of telehealth worldwide
- Barriers to telehealth adoption
- Potential solutions

SECONDARY RESEARCH

- **Patient & Clinician Survey**: patients' behavior changes & their telehealth experiences
- **1:1 Clinician Interviews**
- **Data Analyses**: SHHC internal data and the data from two surveys
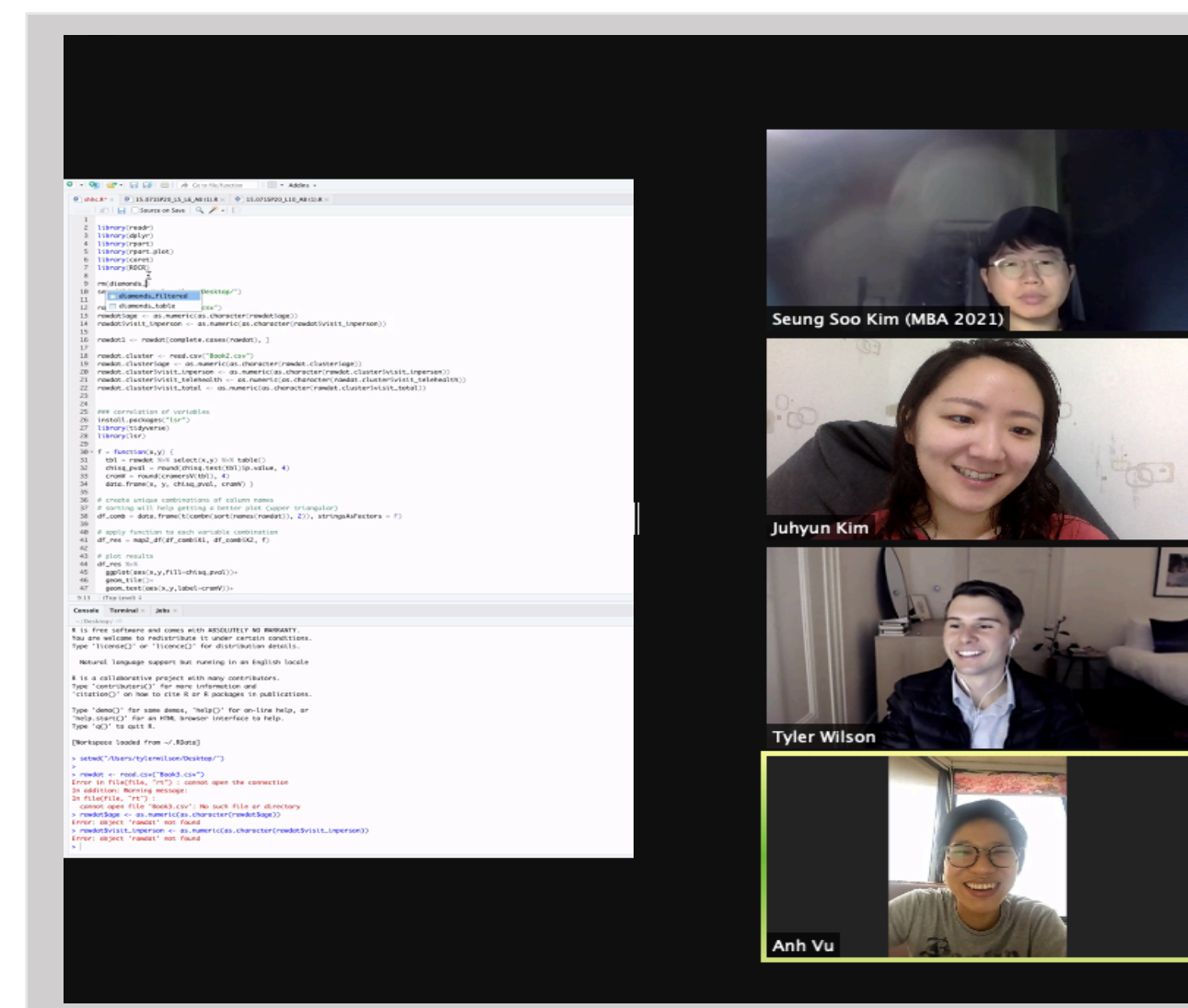
KEY FINDINGS

PATIENT BEHAVIOR CHANGES

- **Hospitalization Rate Dropped in 2020**
- **~20% Lower Hospitalization** for patients who used telehealth service
- **Patients' Visit to the Hospital during the Pandemic:**
  - Significant # of patients visited <u>without consulting with nurses/clinicians first</u>
  - Conversely, some patients chose not to visit despite their nurse/clinicians' advice
- **Different Telehealth Adoption by Patients' Language and Race**

SHHC'S VIRTUAL CARE MODEL EFFECTIVE-NESS

- **80% Patient Survey Respondents had Favorable Experience**
  - **Top Reason:** Safety (to Avoid COVID-19 Risk)
- **Technology As Top Barrier for Effective Usage/Adoption:**
  - 30-50% who never used service had a **willingness to use telehealth if these issues were addressed**
- **"Nurse Language Proficiency" & "Presence of Caregiver /Family" Also Impact Patient Satisfaction Level**

- **80% Clinician Survey Respondents Satisfied with Telehealth**
  - **Top Reason:** Their Own and Patients' Safety
- **Main Suggestions to Improve Telehealth:**
  - More **evidence-based trainings** with **detailed guidelines**
  - **Utilizing technology to** do **video visits** and overcome **communication issues**

RECOMMENDATIONS

PATIENT-SIDE

Better Access to Technology

- Provide hardware/ software to assist senior patients with hearing trouble
- Improve access to smart devices that deliver better visual of patients

Better User Experience for Telehealth

- Educate patients to use video
- Implement solutions with more simple features

PROVIDER-SIDE

Provide Effective Training & Detailed Guidelines

- Organize training sessions that provide many examples and tips

Project Description:

Founded in 1964, Suburban Home Health Care Inc., (SHHC) is a family-owned home health care provider organization with about 1,000 employees. SHHC has over 150 nurses and therapists and 650 home health aides. It is certified by Medicare/Medicaid, providing home health services to about 1,400 patients a day in Boston. Most patients have suffered an acute or severe chronic illness. The goal of SHHC is to keep patients safe and satisfied at their own homes.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, SHHC's goal is to maintain the same excellence of patient care delivery while protecting field clinicians' health and safety. State and federal regulators started reimbursing and encouraging the use of telehealth services; However, there are a number of challenges that SHHC's patients experience while receiving this virtual care..

To address these challenges, SHHC asked MIT team to assess both patient and clinician experience with SHHC's telehealth services and identify areas of improvement to ensure that patients are getting the optimal care. Furthermore, SHHC noticed that there was a drastic reduction in hospitalization rate compared to last year because of the pandemic and would like to understand the main drivers of this change and how they can incorporate key learnings from this study into their model going forward.