

1 **Additional File 1: Information Material for Participants**

2 Dear participants,

3 Thank you very much for your participation in our recent online survey on the topic of
4 telemedicine utilization in primary care. This theme is part of the
5 "Gesundheitsversorgung 4.0" project by the Bavarian State Ministry of Health and Care.
6 Your valuable input helps us develop a comprehensive understanding of this subject and
7 gain better insights.

8 We would like to take this opportunity to explain what we mean by "online
9 consultations" in the context of telemedicine. Online consultations involve an innovative
10 method where general practitioners and patients (often with the support of caregivers in
11 the nursing/ geriatric field) interact through digital platforms.

12 Thanks to the online consultation, the general physician and patient no longer need to
13 be physically present for every medical examination. Based on the digital patient record,
14 a message regarding the health status is created and encrypted, then transmitted to the
15 attending general physician. The general physician receives the message in their office
16 on a computer or tablet. The scale ranges from a non-urgent message marked "white" to
17 a "red" marked message. This color coding allows the physician to prioritize messages
18 and integrate them into their practice workflow accordingly. For instance, a red message
19 indicates that the physician will promptly contact the patient, preferably on the same
20 day, whereas the lowest level might have one to two days' time.

21 Simultaneously, the physician can securely access and review patient data online within
22 a protected network. After evaluating this data along with their own existing patient
23 records, the physician has several options:

- 24 • They can ask for further information, and possibly decide to visit the patient's
25 home for (an adjustment of) treatment.
- 26 • If a home visit isn't absolutely necessary but a personal conversation between
27 patient and physician is needed, an online consultation can be scheduled. By
28 utilizing visual and auditory contact with patients and caregivers via video and
29 audio consultation, physicians can conduct progress checks and treatments.

30 This advanced form of consultation enables us to overcome barriers in terms of
31 availability and distance, enhancing access to medical care. Please take a moment to
32 envision this setup then proceed to answer the questions. Please note that online
33 consultations in this setting are not intended to replace emergency medicine but serve
34 routine purposes!

35 Your opinions and thoughts are extremely important to us, and we are eager to gain
36 further insights from your participation in the survey. Once again, thank you for your
37 support in our efforts to bridge gaps in regional healthcare provision.

38 Best regards,

39 Your Gesundheitsversorgung 4.0-Team