

Patients, Providers, and Plans Increase Utilization of Telehealth Recent Stats 12.8.2022

UTILIZATION

- Medicare fee-for-service (FFS) beneficiary telehealth visits increased 63-fold in 2020, from approximately 840,000 in 2019 to nearly 52.7 million in 2020.¹
- Despite the increase in telehealth visits during the pandemic, total utilization of all Medicare FFS Part B clinician visits declined about 11% in 2020 compared to levels in 2019.¹
- During 2020, chronic care and mental healthcare were the most common virtual services, accounting for 30 percent and 28 percent of all telehealth appointments.²
- Telehealth utilization has stabilized at levels 38X higher than before the pandemic.³
- After an initial spike to more than 32 percent of office and outpatient visits occurring via telehealth in April 2020, utilization levels have largely stabilized, ranging from 13 to 17 percent across all specialties.³
- More than 28 million Medicare beneficiaries—about 2 in 5—used telehealth services that first year. Beneficiaries used 88 times more telehealth services during the first year of the pandemic than they did in the prior year.⁴
- Use of telehealth services increased from about 5 million services pre-waiver (April to December 2019) to more than 53 million services post-waiver (April to December 2020).⁵
- Telehealth services in the Medicare program increased across all provider specialties, and 5 percent of providers delivered over 40 percent of services.⁵
- Use of telehealth services among Medicare beneficiaries decreased from 2020 (48%) to 2021 (34%), but is still above pre-pandemic levels.⁶
- Hispanic beneficiaries, younger beneficiaries, and female beneficiaries were most likely to use telehealth. In addition, beneficiaries almost always used telehealth from home or other non-health-care settings.⁷

AUDIO-ONLY

- Almost one-fifth of beneficiaries used certain audio-only telehealth services, with the vast majority of these beneficiaries using these audio-only services exclusively.⁸
- Older beneficiaries were more likely to use these audio-only services, as were dually eligible and Hispanic beneficiaries.⁸

¹ <https://protect-us.mimecast.com/s/0MjrC82ArzuL36pjUnlujO?domain=cms.gov>

² [Telehealth Use Among Medical Groups Peaked in First Half of 2020 \(mhealthintelligence.com\)](#)

³ [Telehealth: A post-COVID-19 reality? | McKinsey](#)

⁴ [Medicare Telehealth Services During the First Year of the Pandemic: Program Integrity Risks OEI-02-20-00720 09-02-2022 \(hhs.gov\)](#)

⁵ [GAO-22-104454, Medicare Telehealth: Actions Needed to Strengthen Oversight and Help Providers Educate Patients on Privacy and Security Risks](#)

⁶ [COVID19 Data Snapshot Public Release \(cms.gov\)](#)

⁷ [Certain Medicare Beneficiaries, Such as Urban and Hispanic Beneficiaries, Were More Likely Than Others To Use Telehealth During the First Year of the COVID-19 Pandemic OEI-02-20-00522 09-02-2022 \(hhs.gov\)](#)

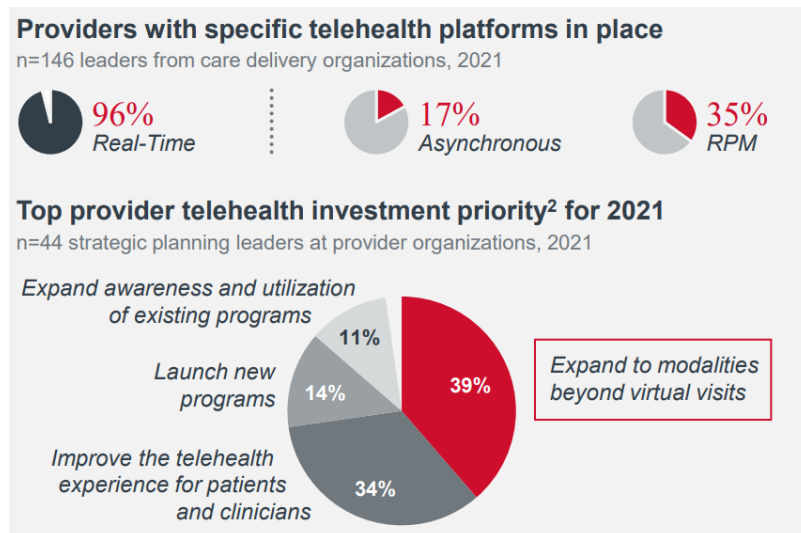
⁸ [Certain Medicare Beneficiaries, Such as Urban and Hispanic Beneficiaries, Were More Likely Than Others To Use Telehealth During the First Year of the COVID-19 Pandemic OEI-02-20-00522 09-02-2022 \(hhs.gov\)](#)

PATIENT SATISFACTION & ENTHUSIAM

- 95% of Medicare beneficiaries were satisfied with their most recent telehealth visit.⁹
- 8 in 10 patients said their primary health issue was resolved with a telehealth visit.⁹
- About 40% of patients interact with providers more because of telehealth.¹⁰
- 83% of patients had a good quality telehealth visit.¹¹
- Nearly two-thirds of patients say that convenience is the top reason why they use telehealth, along with faster access to care (49%) and ease of access to health information (28%).¹²
- 32% of U.S. adults age 50-plus report being extremely or very interested in using telehealth services for themselves or for a loved one.¹³
- 69% of patients use telehealth because it is more convenient than an in-person appointment and 78% said telehealth made it easier to seek health care when they needed it.¹⁴
- 85% of patients said there are an adequate number of medical providers available to them via telehealth.¹⁴

PROVIDER SATISFACTION & ENTHUSIAM

- 80% of providers reported that the overall level of care provided via telehealth was better or equal to that of in-person care.¹⁰
- Over 70% of providers reported that telehealth had made patient continuity of care better or much better.¹⁰
- Providers intend to invest in closing their modality gap¹⁵



⁹ New Survey: Virtual Care Could Keep Low-Acuity Cases Out of Emergency Department | Bipartisan Policy Center

¹⁰ <https://www.goodrx.com/healthcare-access/telehealth/state-of-telehealth-survey-2021?source=email>

¹¹ Telehealth Impact - Patient Survey Analysis (c19hcc.org)

¹² [JD Power Survey Shows Consumers Embrace Telehealth | HealthLeaders Media](#)

¹³ [An Updated Look at Telehealth Use Among U.S. Adults 50-Plus \(aarp.org\)](#)

¹⁴ [New Survey: Americans Value the Convenience and Simplicity of... - AHIP](#)

¹⁵ [State of the Health Care Industry - 9.13.22.pdf](#)

TELEBEHAVIORAL HEALTH/SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER

- During the pandemic, clinicians and researchers learned that telehealth-based OUD treatment is just as effective as in-person care.¹⁶
- Emerging research shows that allowing telehealth-based OUD treatment during the pandemic helped patients initiate and remain on medication treatment, and that these patients stayed in treatment and abstained from illicit opioids at rates comparable to individuals who received care in person.¹⁶
- Telemedicine has been demonstrated to be as effective in the diagnosis and assessment of mental health disorders in a variety of populations across different settings.¹⁷
- There is no clear evidence shows that telemedicine increases diversion risk.¹⁸
- Six out of seven physicians were in favor of making temporary telehealth flexibility permanent for OUD/SUD treatment and over three-quarters of those said they would like to continue using telehealth after the COVID pandemic.¹⁹
- Increased access to telehealth during the pandemic was found to have improved patient outcomes for opioid use disorder.²⁰
- Use of telehealth during the pandemic was associated with improved retention in care and reduction in medically treated overdoses.²¹

FRAUD, WASTE, & ABUSE

- Only a 'very small proportion of providers' billed Medicare inappropriately, indicating that the measures put in place to safeguard against fraud, waste, and abuse related to telehealth worked well to maintain program integrity.²²
- There is no evidence that telehealth is adding to the total volume of Medicare services and patients who used telehealth services did not have more revisits than patients with in-person care.²³

HIGH DEDUCTIBLE HEALTH PLANS

- Nearly all (96 percent) employers adopted pre-deductible coverage for telehealth services under the CARES Act and three-quarters (76 percent) prefer to make the provision permanent.²⁴
- Among employers that did not add pre-deductible coverage, most either plan to do so later (32 percent) or are exploring whether to do so (61 percent).²⁴
- 73% of Americans said Congress should make permanent the provisions that allowed for coverage of telehealth services before paying their full deductible.¹⁴

¹⁶ <https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/issue-briefs/2021/12/state-policy-changes-could-increase-access-to-opioid-treatment-via-telehealth>

¹⁷ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7861202/>

¹⁸ [Use of Telemedicine for Buprenorphine Inductions in Patients With Commercial Insurance or Medicare Advantage | Addiction Medicine | JAMA Network Open | JAMA Network](#)

¹⁹ [Physician Response to COVID-19–Driven Telehealth Flexibility for Opioid Use Disorder \(ajmc.com\)](#)

²⁰ [Pandemic-Related Buprenorphine Prescribing Changes Linked With Improved Outcomes \(hmpgloballearningnetwork.com\)](#)

²¹ [Receipt of Telehealth Services, Receipt and Retention of Medications for Opioid Use Disorder, and Medically Treated Overdose Among Medicare Beneficiaries Before and During the COVID-19 Pandemic | Substance Use and Addiction Medicine | JAMA Psychiatry | JAMA Network](#)

²² [Medicare Telehealth Services During the First Year of the Pandemic: Program Integrity Risks OEI-02-20-00720 09-02-2022 \(hhs.gov\)](#)

²³ [Medicare Telehealth Analysis - Alliance for Connected Care \(connectwithcare.org\)](#)

²⁴ [ebri_ib_542_hsaemployersur-14oct21.pdf](#)

ASYNCHRONOUS TELEHEALTH

- Two-thirds of Americans are in favor of legislation to expand access to asynchronous telehealth.²⁵
- 82% of healthcare workers indicated high levels of support for expanding asynchronous telehealth.²⁵

LOOKING INTO THE FUTURE

- Going forward, more than 60% of respondents planned on using a hybrid model of care that combines telehealth with in-person visits.¹⁰
- 8 in 10 patients are likely to use telehealth in the future.⁹
- 94% of consumers who used telehealth in the past 12 months say they "definitely will" or "probably will" use telehealth to receive medical services in the future.¹²

²⁵ [Telehealth Use Continues to Expand, Can Help Nation's Mental Health Crisis | by Hims | hims & hers | Medium](#)