

The Rise of Telehealth and Virtual Care: What You Need to Know

March 17th, 2022

[Blog](#)



Telehealth usage surged early on in the pandemic as healthcare professionals needed a safe way to see patients. In fact, telehealth office visits and outpatient care in April 2020 were 78 times higher than in February 2020. This exponential growth in telehealth usage has provided many benefits and also shifted how we think about the future of healthcare. Below, we explain these benefits and our prediction for the future growth of telehealth.

Comfort and Convenience

Like most remote options, telehealth provides greater flexibility and convenience. Virtual visits are easier to fit into your busy schedule because patients don't need to physically go to an office to see their doctor. Telehealth allows them to get the care they need right from the comfort of their home.

More control of infectious illnesses

One reason for the extreme shift to telehealth during the pandemic was to prevent the spread of infectious diseases. Telehealth keeps sick people from coming into an office and reduces exposure to germs. This helps keep everyone healthy, especially those who are chronically ill, elderly, pregnant or those who have difficulty fighting off infections.

Better assessments

Being able to see patients remotely from the comfort of their homes lets doctors see them in their everyday environment. This lets doctors give their patients a better assessment. For example, doctors are able to see what the patient's living conditions are like. Do patients have young children who can be overheard in the background? Is their home cluttered? Do they live in a rural area with limited access to health resources? All of these clues give doctors more insight into their patients' health and allow them to provide better assessments.

What's next for the future of Telehealth?

Many doctors and urgent care centers began offering their own telehealth services for non-emergency situations during the pandemic, and they will likely remain an option for the foreseeable future. In addition to the benefits discussed above, this is a great resource for employers to consider adding to their benefits plan. It provides critical components of benefits that the modern-day employee wants: flexibility and convenience. As part of the CARES act, individuals can use their HSAs, FSAs and HRAs to pay for telehealth services. This helps employees get the professional health services that they need, without having to leave home when possible.

Sources:

<https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/healthcare-systems-and-services/our-insights/telehealth-a-quarter-trillion-dollar-post-covid-19-reality>