

Telehealth in Medi-Cal

IMPROVING ACCESS AND EQUITY

Telehealth is an effective alternative to many types of in-person care. Video and phone visits offer additional benefits to patients, such as the elimination of transportation barriers and increased accessibility to care during the workday. For individuals without internet or with restrictive data plans, phone visits are especially critical. If these telehealth options are removed or limited, patients could suffer the consequences of delayed care, further widening the disparities gap.

Patient-centered care through the convenience of telehealth is the new standard of care. Medi-Cal must evolve with the rest of the health care industry to achieve health equity for low-income Californians.

“One of my patients lives far away from their primary care provider and needed some medical help over the weekend. She has several young children and works during the week, so it is always challenging for her to get to see her provider. Additionally, she lives in an area with poor internet access making it difficult to connect by video. She was relieved to connect by telephone to talk with me over the weekend and discuss some medical concerns she had regarding some recent urinary symptoms she was having. We were able to discuss some of the potential causes of her pain and were able to order some laboratory testing for her to complete at a time/location convenient for her. She was started on antibiotics and began feeling better the next day. She didn’t have to miss work and find childcare to come for a medical appointment. The telephone encounter was critical for her to access timely, cost effective, and convenient care.”

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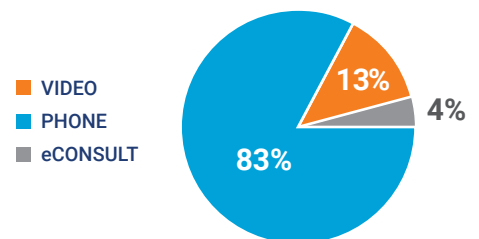
PHONE VISITS ARE ESSENTIAL

Phone visits have provided a critical linkage to care for our patients during the COVID-19 pandemic and will continue to be an important modality once the public health emergency is over. Since video visits are not an option for many patients, maintaining access to phone visits with adequate payment will be crucial for the health and well-being of our patients and communities.

UC DAVIS HEALTH

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, California’s public health care systems dramatically expanded their delivery of video and phone visits. From August 2020 to January 2021, University of California Health, which includes five academic medical centers, provided **an average of 160,781 telehealth visits per month with over 80% conducted by video.**

Telehealth Visits by Type*



*Across University of California Health

We call on the Legislature and Governor to pass **AB 32**, which will ensure that **all Californians have equal access to care through telehealth.**