

# 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.

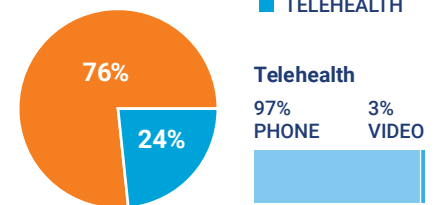
**Patient-centered care through the convenience of telehealth is the new standard of care across the industry. Ensuring phone and video visits are available to all Medi-Cal patients will be vital to achieving health equity for low-income Californians.**

## ARROWHEAD REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER

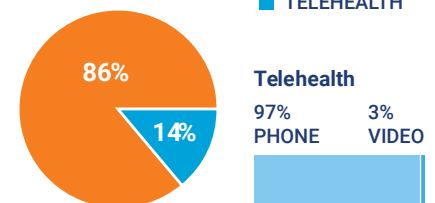
In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, California's public health care systems dramatically expanded their delivery of video and phone visits. From August 2020 to January 2021, Arrowhead Regional Medical Center provided an average of 4,668 telehealth visits per month. **Across both primary care and specialty care, over 95% of telehealth visits were conducted by phone.**

**“One of my patients who has severe eczema, osteoarthritis, congestive heart failure and bipolar disorder always struggled to come into the office due to relying on public transportation to attend all her appointments. She loved the opportunity to have a phone visit because she can have more than one appointment in a day from the comfort of her home. Access to phone visits are critical because she is able to save money on transportation and not feel overwhelmed or fearful of being late to an appointment due to missing a bus route. She also does not have to worry about exposing her skin to the sun as much as she used to. She has mentioned feeling more confident having phone appointments as she tends to feel insecure in public due to her skin condition.”** ALEJANDRA SANTANA, CLINICAL SOCIAL WORKER & SHAPE TEAM MEMBER, ARROWHEAD REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER

### Primary Care



### Specialty Care



## 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.

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