

# 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.

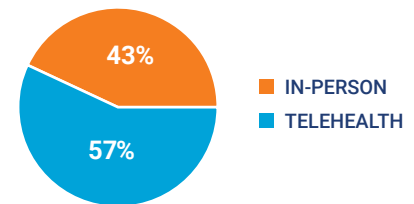
**Patient-centered care through the convenience of telehealth is the new standard of care across the industry. Ensuring phone and video visits are available to all Medi-Cal patients will be vital to achieving health equity for low-income Californians.**

## SAN MATEO MEDICAL CENTER

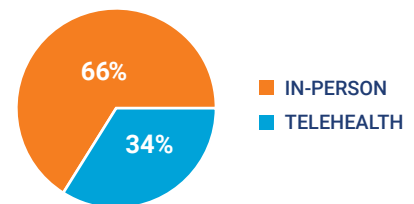
In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, California’s public health care systems dramatically expanded their delivery of video and audio visits. From August 2020 to January 2021, San Mateo Medical Center provided **an average of 11,053 telehealth visits per month (57% of primary care visits and 34% of specialty care visits).**

“One of my 94-year-old patients with progressive heart failure passed away about 10 days ago. Telehealth allowed me to stay connected with her while she slowly decompensated over the past few months. I have been caring for her for years and I truly loved her. We had a televisit the day before she died. She said goodbye, told me she loved me, and thanked me for caring for her. I am so blessed to have gotten that chance to “see” her. We were both crying together along with her daughter on the phone. If it were not for telehealth that visit would not have happened and we would not have been able to say goodbye.” **RAKHI SINGH, MD, SAN MATEO 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.**