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.

"The video visit in perioperative anesthesia management has changed the game for patients who have rare diseases where UCLA serves as a Center of Excellence (COE). I participate as an anesthesiologist in a COE treating a rare adrenaline-secreting tumor - pheochromocytoma. I had a 26-year-old patient who was pregnant and referred to UCLA with this rare disease but lived over 60 miles away from UCLA. Typically, she would need to come into clinic multiple times per week for 3-4 weeks prior to surgery to optimize her blood pressure before a major surgery to remove her tumor. However, using video visits and remote patient monitoring using a Bluetooth-enabled blood pressure device, we were able to manage her pre-operative blood pressure entirely remotely. She was so happy with her remote care, that she wrote a first-person perspective about her telehealth-driven care to a case-report our team published about her rare surgical case while she was still pregnant!" NIRAV KAMDAR, MD, MPP, MBA (ANESTHESIOLOGIST), UCLA HEALTH

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.

UCLA 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*

- VIDEO — 13%
- PHONE — 83%
- eCONSULT — 4%
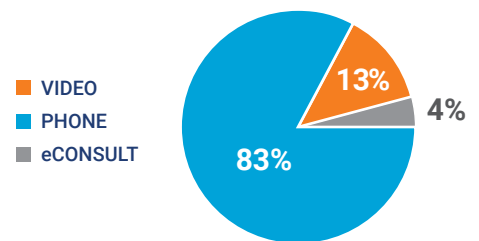
*Across University of California Health

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