

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.

KERN MEDICAL

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, Kern Medical provided **an average of 2,348 telehealth visits per month. In primary care and specialty care, over 95% of telehealth visits were conducted by phone.**

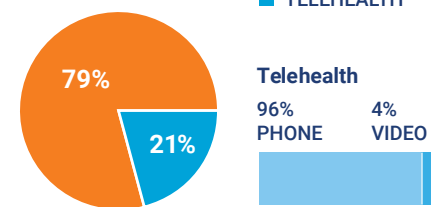
“One of my patients has atrial fibrillation, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and also lives in a rural location, which is almost a 2-hour commute from clinic. During his busy season at work, he would always struggle to come into the office. My patient would have to choose between missing a day of work to come to a medical appointment or a day of income. He loved the opportunity to have a phone visit because it allowed him to check in more often, which helped with compliance during his busy season at work; whereas before he would just no-show for appointments. Access to phone visits are critical because they improve patient access to care, compliance and improve the overall quality of health of my patients.”

SARAH GONZALEZ, MD, KERN MEDICAL

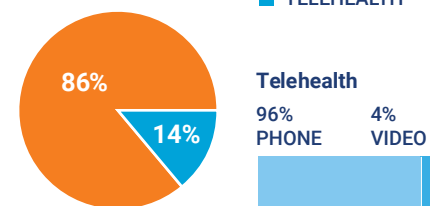
PHONE VISITS ARE ESSENTIAL

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.

Primary Care



Specialty Care



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