

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, Ms. R, is a lovely 62-year-old woman who had a massive car accident years ago. She is incontinent, has chronic leg and back pain, uses a walker, has mild cognitive impairment, lives alone and doesn’t drive. She is not able to learn how to use a device for video visits and struggles to get to clinic in person. Even before the pandemic, she called us frequently. She is immensely grateful for phone visits because we can actually schedule a set time to address all her concerns. As a provider, I love phone visits and feel less exhausted because, for once, I feel like I actually have time to talk with my patients by phone. Before the pandemic, calling patients would eat into my time for all my other tasks, such as documentation, refills, labs results, referrals, responding to messages and, not to mention, time with my family. Taking away phone visits would deny access to some our most vulnerable patients, like Ms. R, and would stoke the flames of provider burnout.” DR. YOSHI LAING, FAMILY MEDICINE DOCTOR AT OUR CONCORD HEALTH CENTER

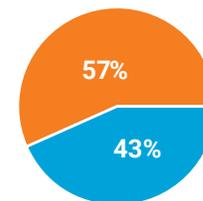
PHONE VISITS ARE ESSENTIAL

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.

CONTRA COSTA HEALTH SERVICES

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, Contra Costa Health Services provided an average of 9,781 telehealth visits per month. **Across both primary care and specialty care, more than 80% of telehealth visits were conducted by phone.**

Primary Care

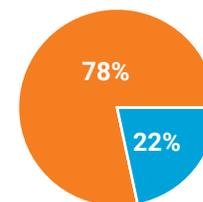


IN-PERSON
TELEHEALTH

Telehealth



Specialty Care



IN-PERSON
TELEHEALTH

Telehealth



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