

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 JOAQUIN COUNTY CLINICS

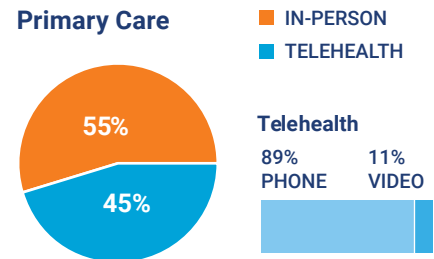
In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, California’s public health care systems dramatically expanded their delivery of video and phone visits. From August 2020 to January 2021, San Joaquin County Clinics provided an average of 6,479 telehealth visits per month.

In primary care, 89% of telehealth visits were conducted by phone.

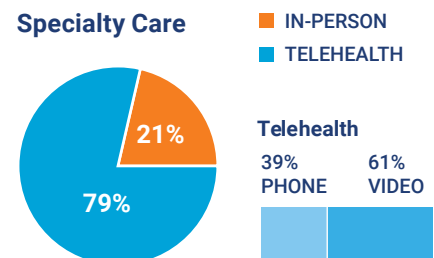
In specialty care, 61% of telehealth visits were conducted by video and 39% by phone.

“Telephone visits have helped manage diabetes better. One of my patients with uncontrolled diabetes used to miss several office appointments due to transportation and financial issues. The patient loved the opportunity to have phone visits, which allowed us to frequently go over home blood sugar values and adjust medications. Her diabetes is significantly improving now. Access to phone visits are vital to improve patient engagement and prevent medication non-adherence.” JANANI SANKARAN, MD, INTERNAL MEDICINE, SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY CLINICS, SAN JOAQUIN GENERAL HOSPITAL

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.**