

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.

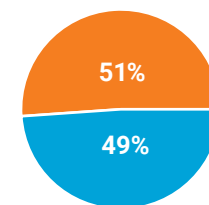
VENTURA COUNTY HEALTH CARE AGENCY

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, Ventura County Health Care Agency provided an average of 16,036 telehealth visits per month.

In primary care and specialty care, over 80% of telehealth visits were conducted by phone.

“Access to telehealth is long overdue, especially for low-income and medically underserved patients who often face challenges that are really hard to overcome in order to attend in-person. Sometimes the challenge is a changing shift schedule at work or a hitting-the-limit credit card with no wiggle room left for gas or Lyft. For patients without access to the internet or with limited data plans, being able to have a visit by phone is critical. Video and phone visits allow us to offer an option for those patients who would otherwise no show or cancel. Access is everything.” DR. STANLEY PATTERSON, MAGNOLIA FAMILY MEDICAL CLINIC, VENTURA COUNTY HEALTH CARE AGENCY

Primary Care



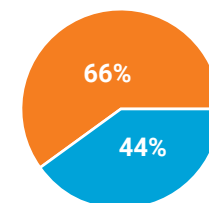
■ IN-PERSON
■ TELEHEALTH

Telehealth*

80% PHONE 20% VIDEO



Specialty Care



■ IN-PERSON
■ TELEHEALTH

Telehealth*

85% PHONE 15% VIDEO



*Out of all specified telehealth visits.

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.**