



A Telehealth Explosion in Texas

Description

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The COVID-19 crisis poses unprecedented challenges to Texas and our nation, touching every facet of American life. In the face of these challenges, Texas health insurance providers are committed to curbing the virus and helping Texans receive the care they need from the safety of their homes — including waiving out-of-pocket costs for telehealth and expanding telehealth programs. During the COVID-19 crisis, federal and state policymakers made emergency policy changes to encourage telehealth use and accelerate its adoption. Even though some people are returning to in-person care, utilization of telehealth remains much higher than it was before COVID-19. High satisfaction among patients and providers indicates that many people who used virtual care services during the crisis are likely to do so again. A recent study of telehealth use in Texas found that 4.5 million Texas patients began using it during the crisis. Nearly all respondents — 94% — said they would use it after the crisis, and 45% said they now trust telehealth options as much as or more than an in-person visit.

As we begin discussing how to carry the recent success of telehealth into the future, it is important to determine which additional policy changes will help

fulfill the promises of telehealth beyond the crisis — improving efficient access to care, enhancing outcomes, and creating cost savings — and which policy changes are an obstacle to achieving those promises. We need solutions that expand — not limit — the use of telehealth, maintain or improve the standard of care, reduce costs, and increase innovation and efficiency in our health care system.

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