

Impact of Telehealth Expansion in Minnesota

OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS FROM INTERVIEWS WITH PATIENTS, PROVIDERS, AND PAYERS

All service recipients reported that they were satisfied with telehealth services. Half expressed a high level of satisfaction. Half of service recipients said their satisfaction was the same for telehealth and in-person care.

Telehealth expansion increased access to care

Service recipients, providers, and payers all said health care access improved as a result of telehealth expansion. About one-quarter of service recipients said telehealth enabled them to see health care providers they would otherwise have been unable to see, especially mental health providers and specialty providers. Telehealth also helped to decrease barriers to care, including:



Increased scheduling flexibility



Reduced time required for visits



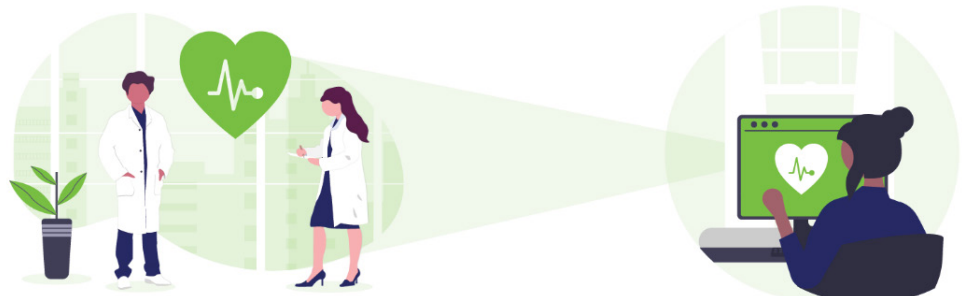
Eased transportation and child care challenges



Reduced health and safety risks associated with in-person care

“I am seeing more follow-through with visits, which means we get through treatment plans and complete goals more than we did before because people are actually continuing [with care] and showing up.” - Provider

“It increased access because I was able to get some care that I wouldn’t have otherwise been able to get in my area at all... The three closest hospitals to me do not have prenatal care.” - Service recipient



Telehealth visits are well-suited for several types of routine care

Providers pointed to a number of conditions or situations that were particularly well-suited to telehealth visits, including:

- Chronic illness such as diabetes, hypertension, or asthma
- Mental health care
- Follow-up care, such as after a procedure or new treatment plan
- Medication management
- Care for established patients



Chronic illness



Mental health



Follow-up care



Medication management



Established patients

Two providers with specialties related to caring for pregnant people also described pre- and post-natal care aspects that can and should be adapted for telehealth. These providers suggested that doing so would further enhance care for pregnant people, especially those from Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) who are impacted by significant disparities in infant and maternal care.

Stakeholders have varying perspectives on payment for telehealth

Despite varying interests in telehealth, each respondent group supported the continued use of telehealth in Minnesota.



Payers

Would prefer a flexible approach to how they cover telehealth and expressed a desire to work with providers to come up with appropriate reimbursement based on things like type of service and service region.



Providers

Believe strongly that all comparable visits should be reimbursed at the same rate, regardless of delivery method. The key reason cited was that reimbursement should be based on their expertise and the service provided.



Patients

Indicated a desire for continued coverage of telehealth services moving forward, and they wanted to ensure that telehealth is affordable through insurance.

To learn more

Visit: <https://www.health.state.mn.us/data/economics/telehealth/index.html> for Wilder's full report of methodology and findings on telehealth.

Contact: telehealthstudy.health@state.mn.us