

# Telehealth's Meteoric Rise: THE PROMISE AND THE PERIL

Across the United States, the use of telehealth has dramatically accelerated in direct response to the COVID-19 pandemic. While the benefits are huge, there are also pitfalls. Here's what it looks like by the numbers.

## The Promise

Primary care providers and patients are on the fast track to widespread telehealth adoption.



### In February

Only 14,000 Medicare beneficiaries per week received a primary care telehealth visit

Less than **0.1%** of visits.

### In April

**44%**

of Medicare primary care fee-for-service visits were provided through telehealth

### As of Mid-Summer

**10 million+**

Medicare beneficiaries had a telehealth service

Source: [www.hhs.gov](http://www.hhs.gov)

## The Predictions

Actions taken by healthcare leaders today will determine whether we will really see the full potential of telehealth post-COVID-19.

**\$250 billion**

The amount of U.S. healthcare spending that potentially could be targeted toward virtual care.



Portion of healthcare office visits and outpatient volume that could be delivered virtually.



of emergency room visits that could potentially be avoided via virtual urgent care offerings.

### Among healthcare providers surveyed:

- **57%** view telehealth more favorably than before COVID-19
- **64%** are more comfortable using it

### Among consumers:

- **76%** of those surveyed indicated they were highly or moderately likely to use telehealth moving forward
- **74%** of telehealth users reported high satisfaction



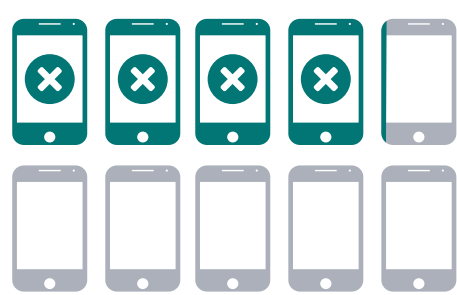
Source: [www.McKinsey.com](http://www.McKinsey.com)

## The Peril

There are major access barriers that must be overcome, particularly among older Americans, who are more likely to have chronic conditions.



of Medicare patients lack access to a desktop or laptop computer with a high-speed internet connection at home



**41%** don't have a smartphone with a wireless data plan



don't have access to either a smartphone or computer



Source: [www.JamaNetwork.com/Journals](http://www.JamaNetwork.com/Journals)

### “UNREADY” for Telehealth:

A National Health and Aging Trends Study calculated how many individuals were “unready” for telehealth. Leading reasons include:

- Had difficulty hearing well enough to use a telephone—even with hearing aids
- Had problems speaking or making oneself understood
- Had possible or probable dementia
- Had difficulty seeing well enough to read a newspaper or watch television—even with glasses



Of patients 85 years and older, **72%** met the criteria for unreadiness



**13 million** older adults may have difficulty connecting with telehealth services

Source: [www.JamaNetwork.com/Journals](http://www.JamaNetwork.com/Journals)