

## 5 Ways that Telehealth Works for Americans

**Telehealth flexibilities introduced during the COVID-19 crisis continue to provide improved access, convenience, and value for patients and consumers.**

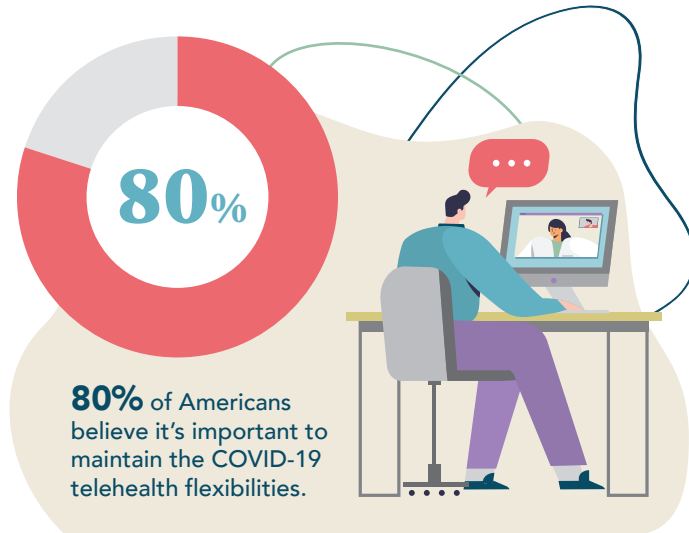
**“Any nation seeking to raise health care quality, increase access, and lower costs should be expanding, not contracting, the use of virtual care.”**

– *Harvard Business Review Magazine*

**Even before the COVID-19 crisis, more patients and health care providers understood and experienced the value of telehealth.** Patients and providers accept – and often prefer – digital technologies as an essential part of health care delivery. Today, it's here to stay as millions of Americans have utilized telehealth to conveniently access affordable, high-quality care.

That's why nearly **80% of Americans with employer-provided coverage believe it's important for the federal government to maintain the COVID-19 telehealth flexibilities for patients.**

The vast majority of adults with employer-provided coverage (76%) consider it important for their coverage to cover telehealth services.



### 1. Eases access to care

With telehealth, patients can access a **wider variety of providers and specialists** than those who are physically practicing in their area. From the comfort of home, patients – including children and young adults, through their parents' employer-provided coverage – are able to consult with quality providers to get the care that they need. In a [recent study](#), **83% of patients said they'll continue to use telehealth** even after the pandemic ends.

## 2. Supports health equity

Telehealth makes it easier for care to **reach underserved communities and individuals living in rural areas**. Patients can connect with a doctor within seconds, eliminating travel time and expenses. [Health insurance providers are investing in bridging the digital divide](#) to increase access to telehealth services wherever there is a need.

## 3. Increases mental health care capacity

[90% of U.S. adults say we're in a mental health crisis](#). Telehealth plays a significant role in both easing access to mental health care and reducing the stigma too often associated with seeking help. The use of telehealth for mental health has remained high since 2020, with [over 60% of commercial insurance telehealth claims](#) related to mental health conditions.

## 4. Enables patients to get specialty care

Americans are using telehealth to access the care they need – everything from mental health support to dietitian guidance and gastroenterology. According to an [AHIP analysis](#) of telehealth claims in 2020 for adults enrolled in commercial health coverage, telehealth services made up over 30% of claims for specialty providers like psychiatrists and psychiatric nurses and dietitians. About 15% of all commercial telehealth claims in 2020 were with a family practice.

## 5. Improves Affordability

Patients who utilized telehealth to see providers during urgent care visits were able to avoid unnecessary tests, saving an average of **\$118** for each visit. According to a [J.D. Power white paper](#) on telehealth adoption and usage, “if providers can reduce emergency department visits by 1% by increasing telehealth adoption, the average emergency department savings would be \$101,920,000 annually.”

Telehealth has become an essential part of our health care system for the nearly 180 million Americans who receive health coverage through their jobs, and millions more. **Congress should make permanent the telehealth flexibilities that were introduced during the COVID-19 crisis to allow for ongoing access, convenience, and value for patients and consumers.**

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### ABOUT AHIP

AHIP is the national association whose members provide health care coverage, services, and solutions to hundreds of millions of Americans every day. We are committed to market-based solutions and public-private partnerships that make health care better and coverage more affordable and accessible for everyone. Visit [AHIP.org](#) to learn how working together, we are Guiding Greater Health.

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### ABOUT COVERAGE@WORK

Coverage@Work (C@W) is a campaign to educate policymakers and the public about the value employer-provided coverage delivers to nearly 180 million Americans. C@W supports and advocates for market-based solutions that advance health, choice, affordability, and value for every American. Learn more at [AHIP.org/CoverageAtWork](#).