



# An Updated Look at Telehealth Use among U.S. Adults 50-Plus

Results from a February 2022 Survey

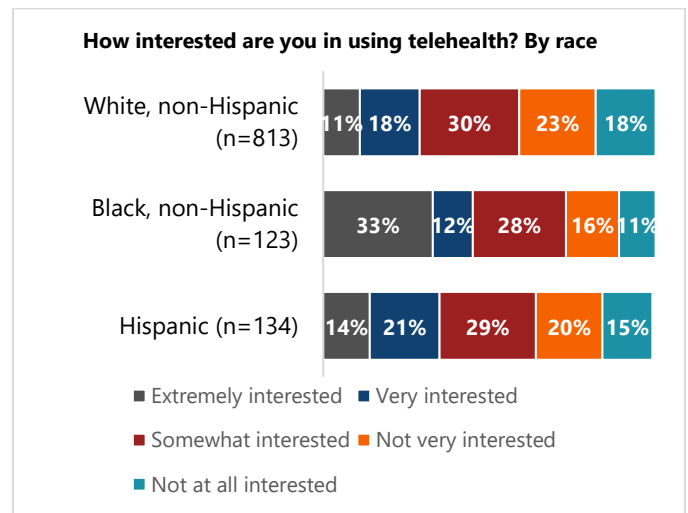
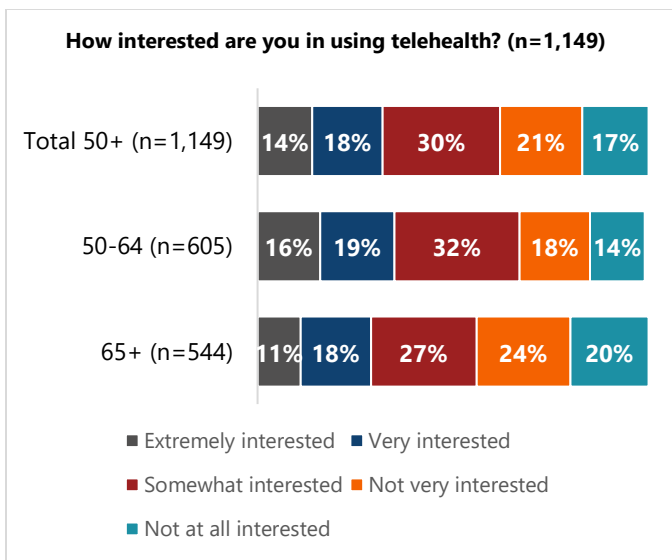
## INTRODUCTION

In the very early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, AARP fielded two short surveys designed to capture midlife and older adults' knowledge and use of telehealth services, and found that one in five (21%) adults age 50-plus reported that they had used telehealth services in the previous month (March 2020).<sup>1</sup> Being interested in seeing whether – and to what extent – the use of telehealth services might have changed in two years, AARP fielded a short survey among U.S. adults ages 50 and older between February 24 and March 4, 2022. In this fielding, with a modification in question wording to align with the duration of the pandemic, we found that half (51%) of adults age 50-plus said they or a family member had used telehealth services *in the previous two years*. Telehealth certainly appears to be here to stay.

## KEY FINDINGS

**Interest in using telehealth services holding steady from April 2020.** About one-third (32%) of U.S. adults age 50-plus report being *extremely* or *very interested* in using telehealth services for themselves or for a loved one, a figure that is essentially unchanged since April 2020 (30%) when we last asked about telehealth use.

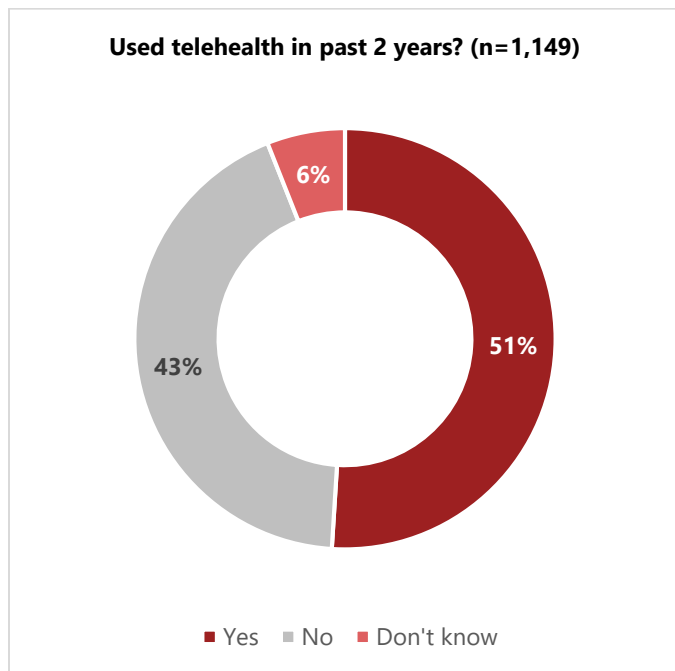
**Interest in using telehealth services varies by gender and race/ethnicity.** Women age 50-plus are more likely than men (17% vs. 10%) to say they are *extremely interested* in using telehealth for themselves or a family member. Additionally, Black, non-Hispanic adults age 50-plus are more likely than their White, non-Hispanic and Hispanic counterparts to express the same level of interest in using telehealth (33% vs. 11% and 14%).



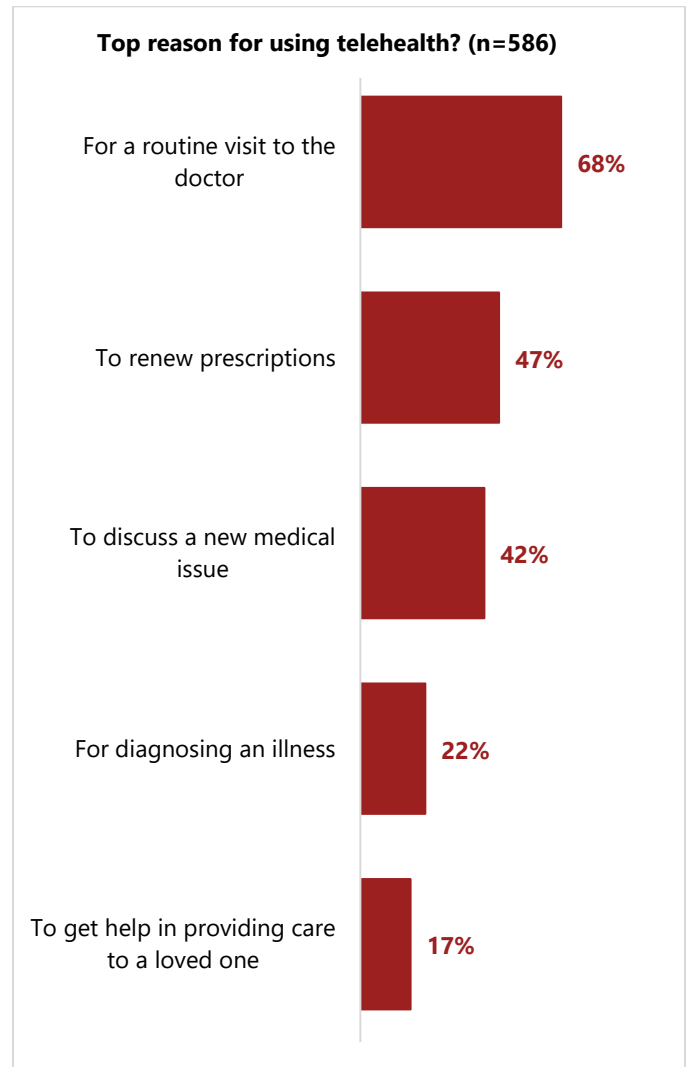
<sup>1</sup> Teresa A. Keenan, Ph.D. *Views on Telehealth*. Washington, DC: AARP Research, June 2020. <https://doi.org/10.26419/res.00388.001>

**Telehealth use common, albeit with differences by age.** Half (51%) of adults age 50-plus say they or a family member have used telehealth in the past two years, with those ages 50-64 more likely than those ages 65 and older to have done so (56% vs. 46%).

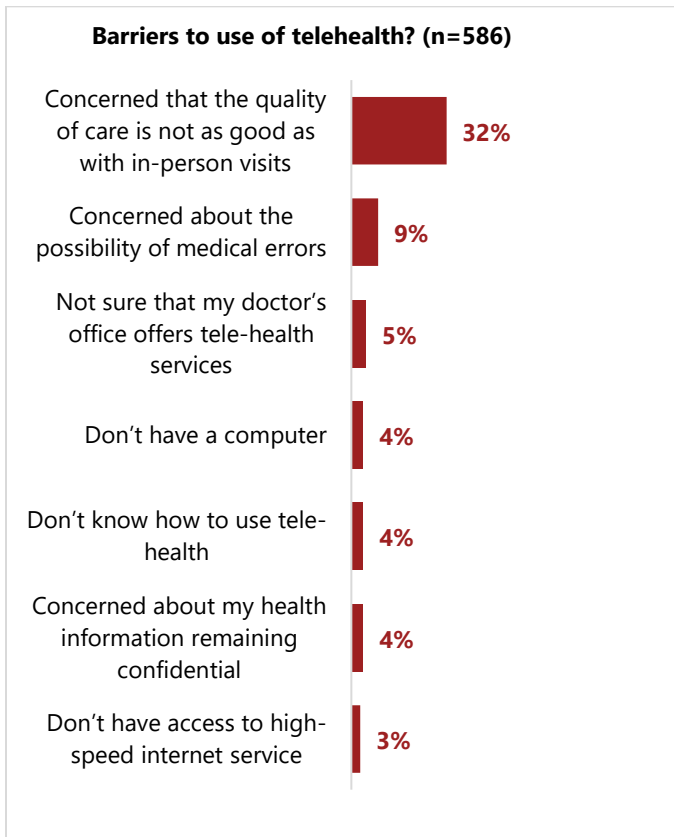
While there are no racial/ethnic differences in reported telehealth use, men age 50-plus are more likely than women age 50-plus to say they have not used telehealth in the past two years (48% vs. 39%).



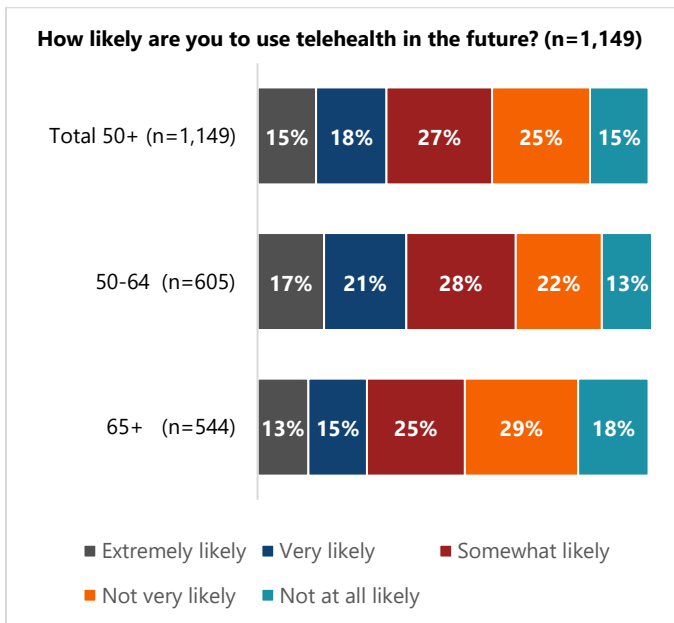
**Routine doctor's visits top reason for using telehealth services,** noted by nearly seven in ten (68%) of those who have used them. More than four in ten telehealth users report using the service to renew prescriptions (47%) and discuss a new medical issue (42%), while about half as many use it for diagnosing an illness (22%) or securing care for a loved one (17%).



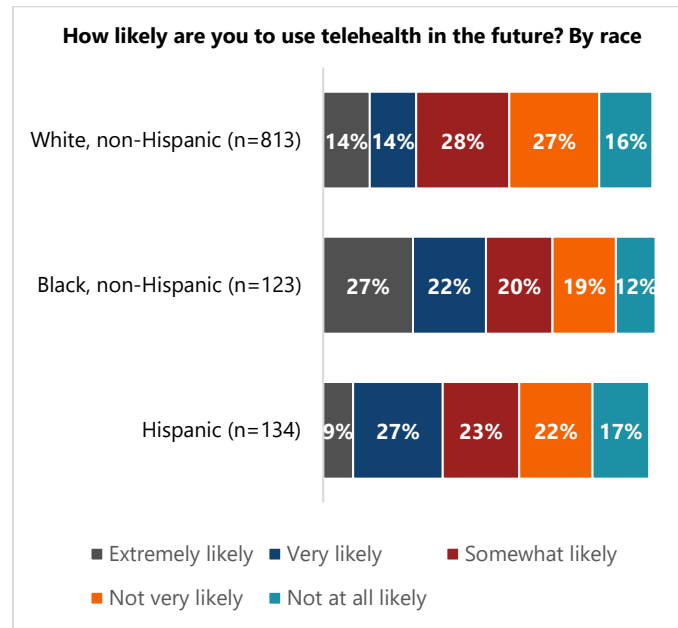
**Six in ten telehealth users report no barriers to use.** When asked what some of the barriers were that they experienced, one-third (32%) cited a concern that the quality of care might not be as good with telehealth visits as with in-person visits. One in eleven (9%) said they were concerned about the possibility of medical errors, while about half as many mentioned uncertainty about whether their doctor offers telehealth (5%), not having a computer (4%), not knowing how to use telehealth (4%), concerns about confidentiality of health information (4%), and not having access to high-speed internet (3%).



**One-third of adults age 50-plus say they are extremely or very likely to use telehealth services in the future for at least some medical appointments.** Notably, adults age 65 and older are more likely than their younger counterparts to say they are *not very likely* to use telehealth services in the future (29% vs. 22%).



**Expected likelihood to use telehealth services in the future for at least some medical appointments varies by race/ethnicity.** Black, non-Hispanic adults age 50-plus are more likely than their White, non-Hispanic or Hispanic counterparts to report it *extremely likely* that they will use telehealth services in the future (27% vs. 14% and 9%). Hispanic adults age 50-plus are also more likely than White, non-Hispanics to say they are *very likely* to use such services in the future (27% vs. 14%).



## IMPLICATIONS

Telehealth has provided a way for individuals and their families to continue to receive needed medical care during the COVID-19 pandemic while remaining safely in their homes. It appears that telehealth is likely to continue to remain an important tool in the health care delivery tool kit – at least for those with computers and high-speed internet access. Continuing to keep an eye on its use (and challenges to its use) will remain critical to ensuring that midlife and older adults receive optimal health care.

## SURVEY RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

*n = 1,149 adults age 50 and older*

Demographic Variable	Weighted
<b>Age</b>	
50 – 64	53%
65 or older	47%
<b>Gender</b>	
Men	47%
Women	53%
<b>Race</b>	
White, non-Hispanic	71%
Black, non-Hispanic	11%
Other, non-Hispanic	1%
Hispanic	12%
Asian, non-Hispanic	4%
2+, non-Hispanic	3%
<b>Hispanic Origin</b>	
Yes	12%
No	88%
<b>Education</b>	
Less than high school	10%
High school graduate/equivalent	30%
Vocational/technical/some college	25%
Bachelor's degree	19%
Graduate degree	15%
<b>Marital Status</b>	
Married	56%
Not married [Net]	44%
--Widowed	7%
--Divorced	18%
--Separated	8%
--Never married	9%
--Living with partner	2%
<b>Household Income</b>	
Less than \$30,000	22%
\$30,000 - \$59,999	26%
\$60,000 - \$99,999	27%
\$100,000 or more	25%

## METHODOLOGY

The data included in this report are drawn from the Telehealth Redux study which was administered via mixed mode (online and phone) February 24 to March 3, 2022 with a total sample of 1,149 adults ages 50-plus. This national survey was conducted for AARP using NORC at the University of Chicago's Foresight 50+ Consumer Omnibus. All data are weighted to the latest Current Population Survey (CPS) benchmarks and are balanced by gender, age, education, race/ethnicity, and region. The margin of error for the national survey is  $\pm 4.05$  percentage points. (Totals may not sum to 100% due to rounding.) For more information on the methodology or the survey, contact Teresa A. Keenan at [tkeenan@aar.org](mailto:tkeenan@aar.org)