

# Survey: Patients Prefer Telehealth Over In-office Visits for Urgent, Preventive, and Specialty Care



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**KeyCare** →

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*Patients strongly prefer telehealth due to speed, convenience and minimizing exposure to other sick people. And yet many health systems are still slow in making these options available.*

CHICAGO, Sept. 24, 2024 /PRNewswire/ -- Patients prefer telehealth to office visits for a variety of medical issues, including urgent care, preventive care, chronic care and specialty services, according to the results of a consumer survey from **KeyCare**, the nation's first Epic-based virtual care company.

For minor but urgent issues, such as cough, sinusitis, and rash, almost 75% expressed a preference for telehealth visits or whichever is first available (between telehealth and office visits). The results were similar for other types of visits, such as preventive, specialty, and chronic care, with over 63% preferring telehealth or whichever is first available, while a minority preferred going into the office.

However, while patients want to use more telehealth, they often do not know about virtual care options available at their health systems. For example, when asked whether their current primary care physician or health system offers on-demand telehealth visits for minor urgent health issue, over 55% were unsure or

answered "No." And when asked whether their health system had ever let them know they could utilize telehealth if the wait for an office visit was too long or it was their preference for other reasons, 41% responded "No."

Survey respondents cited these top reasons for preferring telehealth over in-office visits:

- No need to travel (73%)
- Quicker access to care (67%)
- The desire to avoid being in a waiting room with other sick people (54%)
- More convenient hours (51%)
- Avoiding lost workdays (29%)
- Not wanting to bother their doctor with a minor issue (23%)

Other notable findings from the survey include:

- Over 73% of patients have had a virtual urgent care visit in the past year
- When asked what type of other virtual care visits they have had in the past, patients answered, preventive care (33%), chronic care (32%), behavioral health (32%) and specialty care (14%)
- When asked whether their health system had ever sent pro-active messages about the availability of telehealth for medical visits, 65% said they had not or they were unsure
- When given the scenario of looking to start care with a new health system where the wait for an office visit was over one month, over 82% said they would likely or absolutely choose to do a telehealth visit within three days instead, and only 4.5% would absolutely wait for an office visit
- More than three-quarters (78%) of patients said it was important that their regular doctor and telehealth doctor both have access to their health records, such as current allergies, medications and chronic health conditions. Interestingly, 37% reported that their last virtual provider either did not have access to their medical records or they were unsure if they did

"It is clear that patients place a high value on telehealth for its comfort, convenience, and seamless accessibility to care," said Lyle Berkowitz, MD, CEO of KeyCare. "However, what is also clear is that many patients are not aware of the full breadth of telehealth offerings provided by their health systems and primary care physicians. Health systems should ensure that they are clearly communicating their telehealth options to patients through all available channels, while ensuring that they have as much supply as needed to meet the demand that is growing."



The **survey** of 400 patients who have previously engaged in telehealth visits was conducted in September 2024 on behalf of KeyCare.

## About KeyCare

KeyCare supplies health systems with a network of virtual care providers working on KeyCare's Epic-based EMR and telehealth platform. This allows health systems to improve telehealth access for their patients in a coordinated manner, while also decreasing the burden on their own providers. Health systems can start with nationwide virtual on-demand care (24x7, 50-state coverage), and then may add other primary care and specialty virtual health services based on their needs. To learn more about KeyCare, visit [www.keycare.org](http://www.keycare.org).

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