

Teladoc eyes several new phases of growth for telemedicine

November 29 2020, by Tom Murphy



This is image provided by Teladoc, shows Teladoc CEO Jason Gorevic. Telemedicine provider Teladoc Health wants to play a bigger role in managing patient care, especially for people with chronic conditions. (Teladoc via AP)

Fresh off a big acquisition and riding a wave of customer growth, Teladoc Health is ready to do more for patients.

CEO Jason Gorevic said the telemedicine provider can play a big role in helping people manage [high blood pressure](#), diabetes or other [chronic conditions](#).

Plus he wants customers to think well beyond [primary care](#) when they consider telemedicine, which involves care delivered remotely, often with a live video connection through smartphones or tablets.

Last month, Teladoc finished a more than \$18 billion deal to buy the technology company Livongo. Separately, the telemedicine provider said its total visits have more than doubled to 7.6 million so far this year, as COVID-19 has pushed more people to try remote care.

The 49-year-old Gorevic spoke recently with The Associated Press. The conversation has been edited for clarity and length.

Q: You've talked about using the Livongo deal to create whole person virtual care. What will that look like?

A: You may be somebody with high blood pressure using a Livongo blood pressure cuff that's uploading data. If you have one day of high blood pressure, we may send you a digital nudge that reminds you, 'Hey, you should make sure that you're watching yourself.' If it's high for a week, we may reach out with a coach. And if it's high for a few weeks, now we have a doctor who's available to connect and maybe change your medications and make sure you are taking (them) and that it's the right dosage.

Q: Would the doctor call the patient?

A: No, we're going to send you something that gives you the opportunity to request a visit. And if you're not responding, we may reach out with a coach who offers to connect you.

Q: Before the pandemic, one of telemedicine's biggest challenges was making patients remember to use the service when they need it. What's the next big challenge?

A: Continuing to make them aware of the breadth of conditions that can be treated virtually. What they can get from virtual care is eye-opening to most people.

Q: Outside primary care, name a specialty primed for telemedicine growth.

A: We have a rapidly growing dermatology business. But it goes beyond that. We work with hospitals on a variety of cases ranging from oncology to cardiology to post-surgical follow up visits.

Q: What place does [artificial intelligence](#) have in virtual care? Will patients have basic care needs handled by a computer algorithm that asks questions and gathers data?

A: We think that AI can augment physicians to help them deliver better care. But we feel very strongly that [data science](#) can provide things like intelligent health nudges, looking at your [blood](#) sugar levels and reminding you based on whether you had breakfast, hey, maybe going out and taking the dog for a walk would be a good thing.

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