

Small physician offices are seeing negative effects from virtual health care models

April 15 2021

In a newly released study, researchers found that remote and virtual care models can negatively impact small physician offices. Three researchers from University of Colorado Denver conducted the study, which was published in the *National Library of Medicine*.

The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the adoption of remote and virtual care models in both small and large [health](#) care facilities around the world. CU Denver researchers Jiban Khuntia, Ph.D., Rulon Stacey, Ph.D., and Madhavan Parthasarathy, Ph.D., initiated this study to assess the perceptions small health care businesses' have regarding the impact of remote and virtual care on their business sustainability during the pandemic.

The team analyzed how well perceptions of virtual care aligned with the current business scenarios of those surveyed. In total, researchers spoke with three different groups of health care facilities across Colorado—82 clinics, 99 small [physician](#) offices, and 89 pharmacies.

The study found the perception of virtual health models varied between the three groups. Clinics surveyed believe their virtual care directly affects their current business scenario. Overall, their attitude towards the virtual [model](#) was positive. Small physician offices reacted differently to the survey. They believe while virtual care models significantly affect their business scenarios, it mostly comes with [negative impacts](#) such as a decrease in revenue. Pharmacies saw no significant effect on their current [business](#) scenarios from the virtual model.

"We see small physician offices struggle to keep up with the changes COVID-19 has brought," said Khuntia "While they are ready to adapt to the changes virtual care models bring, the revenue stream isn't what it used to be with in-person visits."

Why is this important?

"If small health care firms cannot compete with the virtual model, they will become nonoperational," said Stacey. "This will damage traditional health services, particularly for critical care delivery and other services that cannot be done virtually."

The current perception small health care businesses have toward remote care will give [policy makers](#) a better understanding of the pros and cons of rapidly adopting the remote virtual care model. For small physician offices to survive, there must be a balance between in-person and virtual care.

More information: Madhavan Parthasarathy et al, Impact of Remote and Virtual Care Models on the Sustainability of Small Health Care Businesses: Perceptual Analysis of Small Clinics, Physician Offices, and Pharmacies in Colorado, *Journal of Medical Internet Research* (2021). [DOI: 10.2196/23658](https://doi.org/10.2196/23658)

Provided by University of Colorado Denver

Citation: Small physician offices are seeing negative effects from virtual health care models (2021, April 15) retrieved 23 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2021-04-small-physician-offices-negative-effects.html>

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