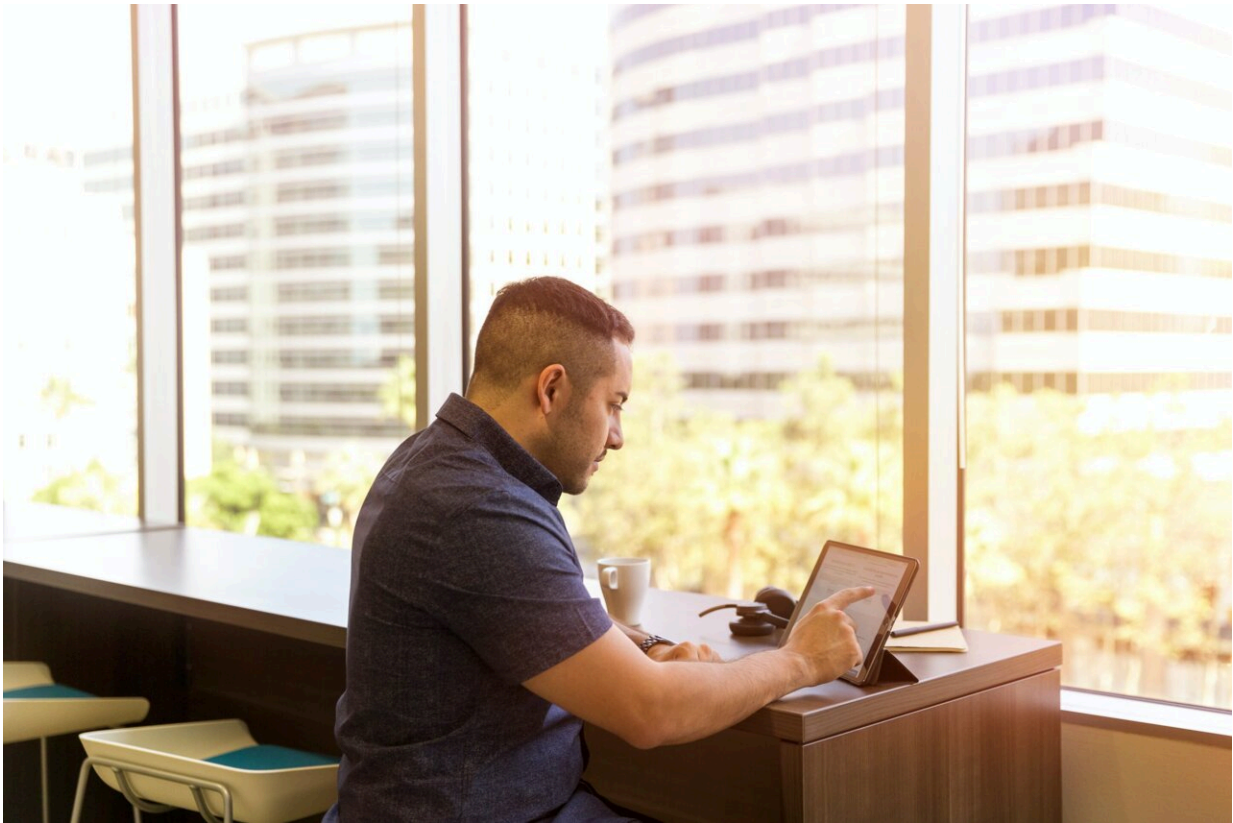


# Disparities in telehealth utilization among Medicare beneficiaries

May 3 2023

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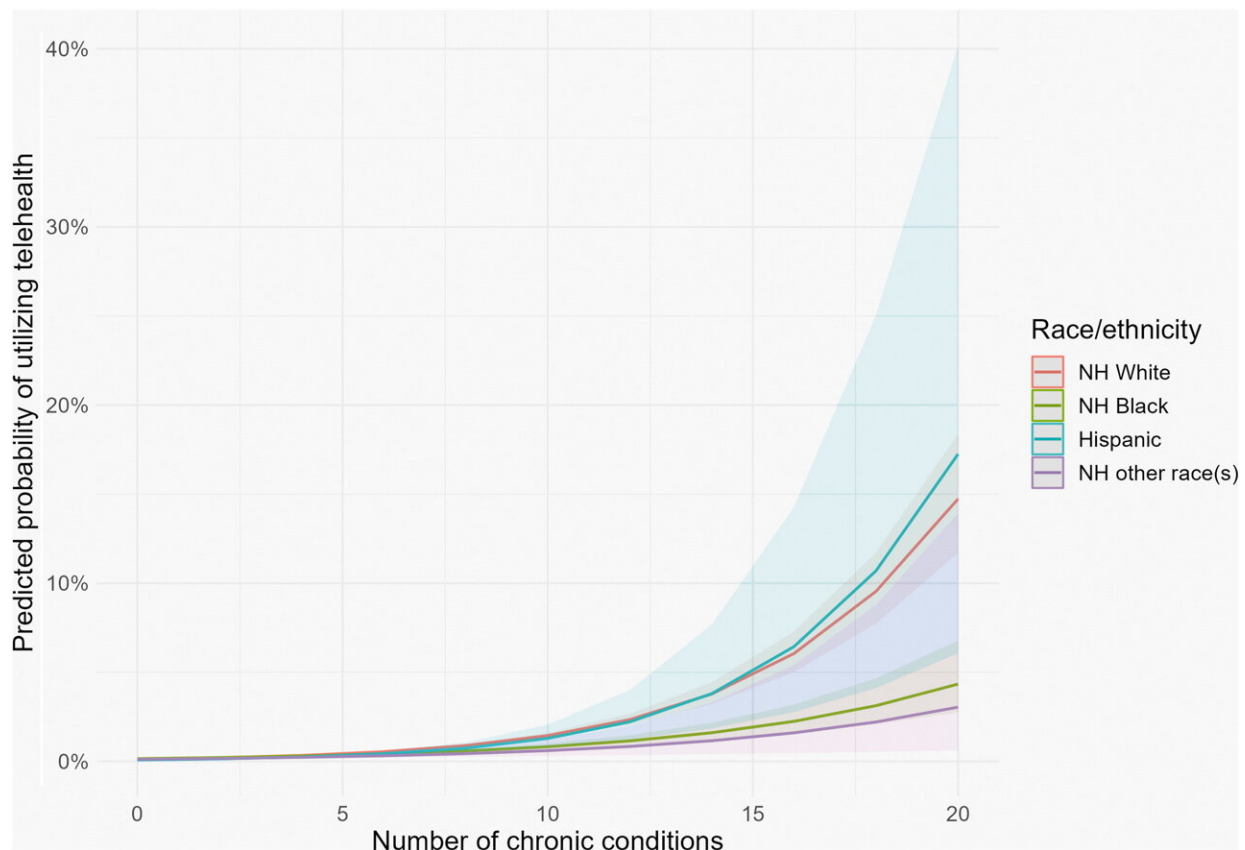
Credit: Unsplash/CC0 Public Domain

A new study of telehealth utilization among Medicare beneficiaries in Arkansas showed race/ethnicity and rural/urban disparities. The study, which reported that the association between the number of chronic

conditions and telehealth was strongest among White and rural beneficiaries, is published in the journal *Telemedicine and e-Health*.

Innovative technologies such as telehealth can improve [health care access](#) in underserved areas and in aging populations with growing and complex medical needs. However, the use of telecommunications in clinical settings faces obstacles, particularly among rural and older populations, including broadband internet connectivity, provider and patient access to compatible devices, and digital literacy.

In the current study, Cari Bogulski, Ph.D., from the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, and co-authors, investigated rural and racial/[ethnic differences](#) in telehealth use for the top 30 chronic conditions reported among Medicare beneficiaries in Arkansas.



Predicted probabilities of telehealth utilization among four racial/ethnic groups with 0–20 chronic conditions. Credit: *Telemedicine and e-Health* (2023). DOI: 10.1089/tmj.2023.0012

"We found that the positive association between telehealth use and the number of [chronic conditions](#) was strongest among white and rural individuals, and weakest among urban and non-Hispanic Black or African American beneficiaries," stated the investigators. "Telehealth systems saw immense growth during the COVID-19 pandemic."

"Disparity in health care delivery remains an issue. Telemedicine and telehealth can be of great help in this regard if applied across the entire health sector, says Charles R. Doarn, MBA, Editor-in-Chief of the Journal and Research Professor in the Department of Environmental and Public Health Sciences, and Director of the Space Research Institute for Discovery and Exploration at the University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, Ohio.

**More information:** Cari A. Bogulski et al, A State Profile of Disparities in Telehealth Utilization Among Medicare Beneficiaries: An Intersection Between Race/Ethnicity, Rurality, and Chronic Conditions—Arkansas, 2019, *Telemedicine and e-Health* (2023). [DOI: 10.1089/tmj.2023.0012](#)

Provided by Mary Ann Liebert, Inc

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