

Amazon takes another shot at health care, this one a virtual care service that costs \$9 per month

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An Amazon company logo marks the facade of a building, March 18, 2022, in Schoenefeld near Berlin. Amazon is taking another stab toward becoming a regular health care source for customers with the launch of a service centered on virtual care. The e-commerce giant says its Prime customers can now get quick access to a health care provider through a program that costs \$9 a month or \$99 annually. Credit: AP Photo/Michael Sohn, File

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The e-commerce giant says its Prime customers can now get quick access to a health care provider through a program that costs \$9 a month or \$99 annually.

The announcement this week arrives less than a year after Amazon announced the \$3.9 billion acquisition of the membership-based primary care provider One Medical, which has medical offices in more than 20 markets.

The company has made a number of attempts to incorporate health care into its platform and has started building momentum after some initial setbacks.

The company [announced in August](#) that it was adding video telemedicine visits in all 50 states to a virtual clinic it launched last year.

Yet Amazon shut down a virtual health care service last year that it spent years developing, and it was part of a high-profile but failed push to address health care costs in a partnership with two other major companies, Berkshire Hathaway and JPMorgan.

Through the new service, patients will be able to connect virtually around the clock with care providers through its Prime One Medical membership program. The service includes video chats and an option to make in-person visits if there are One Medical locations near by.

The company said Wednesday that its membership fee covers the cost for the virtual visits. But customers would have to pay for any visits they make to the company's One Medical primary care offices. They can use insurance for that.

Virtual care grew popular during the COVID-19 pandemic, and many health care providers have since expanded their telemedicine offerings. It has remained popular as a convenient way to check in with a doctor or deal with relatively minor health issues like pink eye.

While virtual visits can improve access to help, some doctors worry that they also lead to care fragmentation and can make it harder to track a patient's overall health. That could happen if a patient has a regular doctor who doesn't learn about the virtual visit from another provider.

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