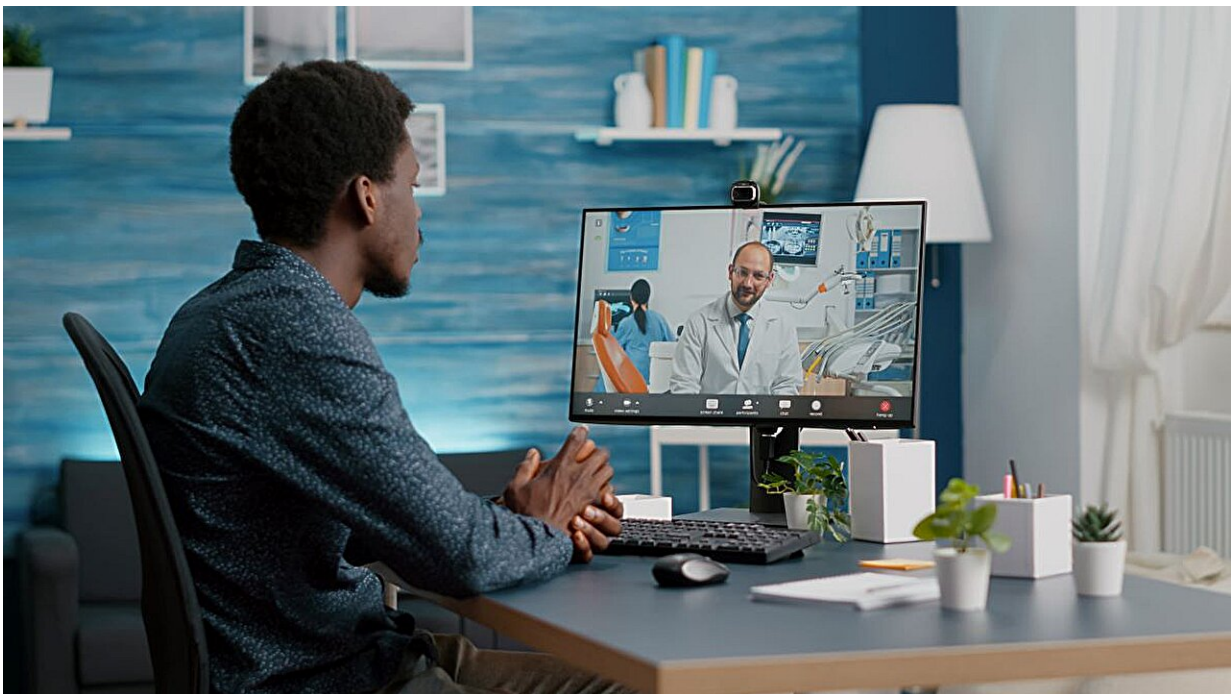


# Telehealth only partially offset decreased primary care visits during pandemic: Study

July 23 2024, by Lori Solomon

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Decreases in primary care visit volume were partially offset by increasing telehealth use for all patients during the COVID-19 pandemic, according to a study [published](#) in *Annals of Family Medicine*.

Zachary J. Morgan, from the American Board of Family Medicine in Lexington, Kentucky, and colleagues quantified the nationwide decrease

in primary care visits and increase in telehealth utilization during the pandemic and explored whether certain groups of patients were disproportionately affected. The analysis included 1.65 million patients (8.83 million visits) seen at 408 practices.

The researchers found that during the pandemic, there were decreases of 7% in total volume and 17% for in-person visit volume, yielding a 10% telehealth conversion ratio. The greatest decreases in visit volume were seen among [pediatric patients](#) (−24%), Asian patients (−11%), and those with more comorbidities (−9%). Hispanic or Latino patients (17%) and patients living in [urban areas](#) (12%) had the highest telehealth usage.

"These variations [in telehealth utilization] have implications not only for the long-term consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, but also for planners seeking to ready the primary care delivery system for any future systematic disruptions and to mitigate any potential exacerbation of existing disparities," the authors write.

**More information:** Zachary J. Morgan et al, The Disproportionate Impact of Primary Care Disruption and Telehealth Utilization During COVID-19, *The Annals of Family Medicine* (2024). [DOI: 10.1370/afm.3134](#)

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