

COVID-19 telemonitoring program helps reduce hospital admissions and ER visits

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The rapid upscaling of a telemonitoring program in which health care providers performed daily telemedicine check-ins on COVID-19 patients faced a unique set of challenges. How these were resolved, and

early outcomes, are reported in the peer-reviewed journal *Telemedicine and e-Health*.

"Kaiser Permanente's Virtual Home Care Program (VHCP) was able to rapidly establish a telemedicine-based program for the management of COVID-19 positive patients in the DC and Baltimore Metro regions. Preliminary data suggest that such a program may be effective in keeping patients out of the hospital and/or emergency room," stated James Shaw, MD, Med-Atlantic Permanente Medical Group, and coauthors.

The researchers described three main challenges. The constant flow of providers into and out of the program. Challenges in the management of Spanish-speaking patients and the need for translators. The initial lack of an alert system in the pulse oximetry [program](#) to alert patients and providers when a patient registered a low oxygen reading.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has provided an opportunity for telemedicine and telehealth to grow exponentially. Kaiser's work in the DC Metro area is a testament to providers developing and implementing new ways in rapid fashion in order to maximize [health](#) care delivery," says Charles R. Doarn, MBA, Editor-in-Chief of the Journal and Research Professor and Director of the Master of Public Health Program, Department of Environmental and Public Health Sciences, University of Cincinnati, Ohio.

More information: James G. Shaw et al, A Novel Large Scale Integrated Telemonitoring Program for COVID-19, *Telemedicine and e-Health* (2021). [DOI: 10.1089/tmj.2020.0384](https://doi.org/10.1089/tmj.2020.0384)

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