

Telehealth from the Patient's Perspective

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About The ALS Association

The ALS Association is the nation's largest comprehensive patient organization serving the needs of the ALS community.

- The largest private funder of ALS research.
- Provides extensive care support to the ALS community.
- We accredit and support the nation's network of ALS specialty clinics.
- The only ALS organization that works on advocacy at the local, state and federal level.



The Rise of Telehealth



- According to a recent McKinsey and Company survey, telemedicine utilization by patients peaked in September 2020 with virtual visits 78 times higher than prior two months
- However, by summer of 2021 patient's utilization of telehealth began to decline
- During the pandemic and immediately following patients preferred telemedicine
- Recent studies based on surveys in 2023 seem to indicate patients returning to their preference for in person visits
- However, a majority of patients still approve of telemedicine



Why Patients like Telehealth

- Lack of travel
- Convenience
- Time saved
- Scheduling ease
- Avoid others who may be sick
- Access to a greater variety of services
- Patients like remote symptom monitoring



Why patients prefer in-person visits

- More accurate diagnosis of the disease
- More accurate and better examination of the patient by the provider - for example, pain assessment
- Better treatment of the disease
- Better connected to the provider – there is more confidence in the patient provider encounter vs. a telehealth visit



Why Behavioral Health patients like Telehealth

- Greater access to providers throughout the day and week
- Greater access to different types of providers and specialists
- Telehealth can create a community for isolated patients
- Patients like the therapy apps – BetterHelp, Talkspace, I am Sober etc.
- Helps with concerns about stigma



Ways to improve Telehealth – clinical view

- Wider device compatibility and internet access
- More technical support
- Clear expectations with providers
- Expand services available by telehealth
- Adapt telehealth to accommodate language barriers



Ways to improve Telehealth – policy view

- Better coverage alignment across commercial payers, Medicare and Medicaid
- More consistent coverage policies within the commercial market
- Greater transparency for coverage policies within the commercial market
- Expand services available by telehealth
- Make telehealth policy more predictable –
make permanent, policies that are working

Methods and Sources



Survey of recent studies on telemedicine and from and interviews:

The National Institutes of Health – The Patient Perspective of Telemedicine in the Context of Covid-19 Pandemic

BMC Medical Informatics and Decision Making – Patients’ perspectives and preferences toward telemedicine vs. in-person visits a study of 1226 patients

Exploring patient perspectives on telemedicine monitoring – International Journal of Medical Informatics

Health Recovery Solutions – Remote Patient Monitoring

Patient organization interviews: NAMi - Washington, ALS Association - Alaska

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