



COVID-19 PATIENT PRIMARY CARE SURVEY

SERIES 4 FIELDLED AUGUST 17, 2020



Despite the challenges presented by the pandemic, 2 of every 3 people surveyed contacted their primary care doctor in July/August. COVID-19 has led to patients seeking care through a variety of different outlets, many making use of multiple options: phone, e-mail, and video, with 38% reporting in-person visits. The use of telehealth has become more widely accepted: 52% report that they feel it's easier to get care with phone/video options and 56% hope that these options are available after the pandemic. While telehealth has provided an outlet for some, financial concerns or general fear of catching COVID-19 have led to a delay in routine patient care for others.

Reasons for contacting their doctor ranged from previously scheduled visits to general questions or concerns

- 42% had a previously scheduled wellness visit and 24% had a previously scheduled visit for a chronic condition
- 50% had a non-COVID related question or concern
- 5% were generally upset and didn't know who else to call

Telehealth alternatives to in-person appointments were valued by patients and used frequently

- 69% of patients report that they're comfortable meeting with their doctor on the phone
- 65% are comfortable doing so through video
- 52% feel that it's easier to get care with video or phone options
- 56% of patients even hope that video or phone visits are around after the pandemic

Despite patient interest in telehealth, obstacles to accessing care remain creating unnecessary health vulnerabilities

- Patients report self-limiting their care because: 51% worry about affording a co-pay, 56% worry about the deductible, and 54% don't have cash left in their health savings account
- 32% are worried about catching COVID-19 at their doctor's office
- Many respondents were overdue for several routine needs: 38% for wellness visits, 20% for vaccinations/immunizations, 20% cancer screenings, 20% for chronic conditions, and 28% for routine lab work

Clearly important throughout the pandemic has been the patient-clinician relationship

- 41% of patients would either panic or be heartbroken if their doctor's office went out of business
- 40% of patients feel that it's very important to be known by their doctor
- 65% have a doctor that they can trust, 53% feel connected to their doctor, and 53% feel that they can ask their doctor about anything, medical or not
- 15% report that their doctor or practice called them after a visit and 11% had their doctor call them just to check how they're doing

Methods – This survey fielded by The Larry A. Green Center, in partnership with the Primary Care Collaborative and 3rd Conversation. The survey was offered through public posting on a survey website and open to people 18 or older until a minimum threshold of 1000 responses was reached. This is a convenience sample, voluntary and anonymous, with enrollment becoming limited as it filled to ensure diversity in respondent demographics. Fielded August 17, 2020.

Sample – 1078 respondents from a range of education levels (37% high school degree, 21% 2-year college degree, 27% 4-year college degree, 12% graduate degree, 3% Doctoral degree), income levels (46% less than \$50,000 household income, 5% greater than \$150,000 household income), and geographies (30% urban, 49% suburban, and 21% rural). 32% were 18-35 years old, 24% were over 55. Level of health varied with 51% rating their health as excellent or mostly good and 30% saying good. 45% were male, 53% female; 45% were full time employed and 13% were part time employed. 19% lost employment during the pandemic.

"While COVID-19 may be the health concern at the top of everyone's mind, other illnesses and medical needs still require timely attention. That's why our primary care work hard to maintain the same level of safety and quality as before COVID-19 affected our communities." – Maryland

Open text comments from patients regarding ...

... difficulty accessing care due to insurance, wait times, and limiting in person appointments

- Coronavirus had a very bad impact on my medical care because - as someone without health insurance - it took away my access to primary care that I could afford and that I felt met my needs. Colorado
- It's difficult to get the care you need when the doctor's office doesn't really want people coming in. Having stomach issues during COVID19 has made it difficult to get the proper diagnosis. California
- Appointment wait times are longer. Georgia
- It just does not feel safe during these times. Emergency patients should be priority, my check up can wait until it is safe again to go out. New Jersey
- I have cancelled all my in-person visits for this year due to the pandemic. Florida
- I have not been to the doctor since the very begin of 2020 and it's due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Since I haven't felt sick the past few months I feel bad to take a coveted appointment at a doctor's office away from someone who isn't feeling well, especially if that person might have COVID-19. I know it is foolish and irresponsible for me to feel this way and that I should still be seeing my doctor if I need to. I will probably resume going to the doctor within the next few months. New York

... the good and bad of telehealth visits

- Someone needs to fix the internet, so you don't have to down load apps to do the visual talk with your doctors. Old people don't know how to do lot of that stuff.... Maryland
- I have had multiple phone appointments! They video calls were fine but I prefer in person. Illinois
- I feel like telehealth has been a great thing during the pandemic, but I worry that other people don't have access to the same technology or internet that I do--therefore, they can't access the same healthcare resources. Missouri

... the continued strain of the pandemic on psychological well-being and daily stress

- Just a lot of emotional stuff. Nevada
- I feel as if the quarantines have caused my family to have more issues with anxiety and depression. Texas
- This pandemic has completely ruined my family and [me] financially. North Carolina
- SCARED. Virginia
- Information not readily available about what to do if contracting Covid. Rhode Island

... ongoing appreciation for the work of primary care as a whole and their clinicians specifically

- She has been very good about staying in contact with office policies, she is not seeing patients in the office only by tele health at the moment. Florida
- My insurance & doctor changed, my last doctor didn't seem to want to know me as a person. I'm hoping this next one will. Florida
- I use VA Healthcare, they have always been there for me throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. Washington
- My Dr/Nurse Practitioner is the best and more than understanding and always helps to ease my mind when I'm worried about the pandemic. West Virginia
- My Doctor and Physicians Group appear to handle the COVID cleanings/distancing very well. Illinois
- He is excellent and i trust him even during the pandemic. Virginia
- I have felt safe at my doctor's office. Kentucky
- My Doctor is awesome. Very caring & understanding. North Carolina
- My doctors are fantastic. I have extensive health issues and they all work together to give me the best treatment available. Oklahoma
- While COVID-19 may be the health concern at the top of everyone's mind, other illnesses and medical needs still require timely attention. That's why our primary care teams have worked hard to maintain the same level of safety and quality as before COVID-19 affected our communities. Maryland