



# Telehealth in Kansas: Provider and Patient Experience During COVID-19 Cross-Study Report

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# Overview

- Key Takeaways
- Review of Study Phases
- Results Across Studies

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- Review of Study Phases
  - 1: Provider/administrator survey
  - 2: Consumer poll
  - 3: Provider/administrator follow-up interviews
  - 4: Consumer focus groups
- Results Across Studies

# Overview

- Key Takeaways
- Review of Study Phases
- **Results Across Studies**
  - Patient access to care
  - Barriers to care (patients and providers)
  - Patient-specific barriers to care
  - Provider-specific barriers to care
  - The future

# Key Takeaways

- During COVID-19: Rapid movement to more telehealth options
- Providers said telehealth could maintain continuity of care
- Patients appreciated that telehealth could save time and money, was convenient, and offered an alternative to in-person
- Patient access to devices and internet was generally good
- Patients reported rural broadband access could be improved

# Key Takeaways

- All (patients, providers, and administrators)
  - Stated telehealth increased access to care during the pandemic
  - Overall were satisfied with telehealth, with some drawbacks
  - Agreed not all health services were well-suited to telehealth
  - Occasionally had doubts about ability of telehealth to meet health needs
  - Agreed telehealth is here to stay
  - Would welcome more standardization while retaining flexibility

# Review of Study Phases

**Provider/  
Administrator Survey**  
247 responses

**86.1% from  
outpatient orgs**

**60.6% were  
physicians**

**Provider/  
Administrator  
Interviews**

**14 interviewees**

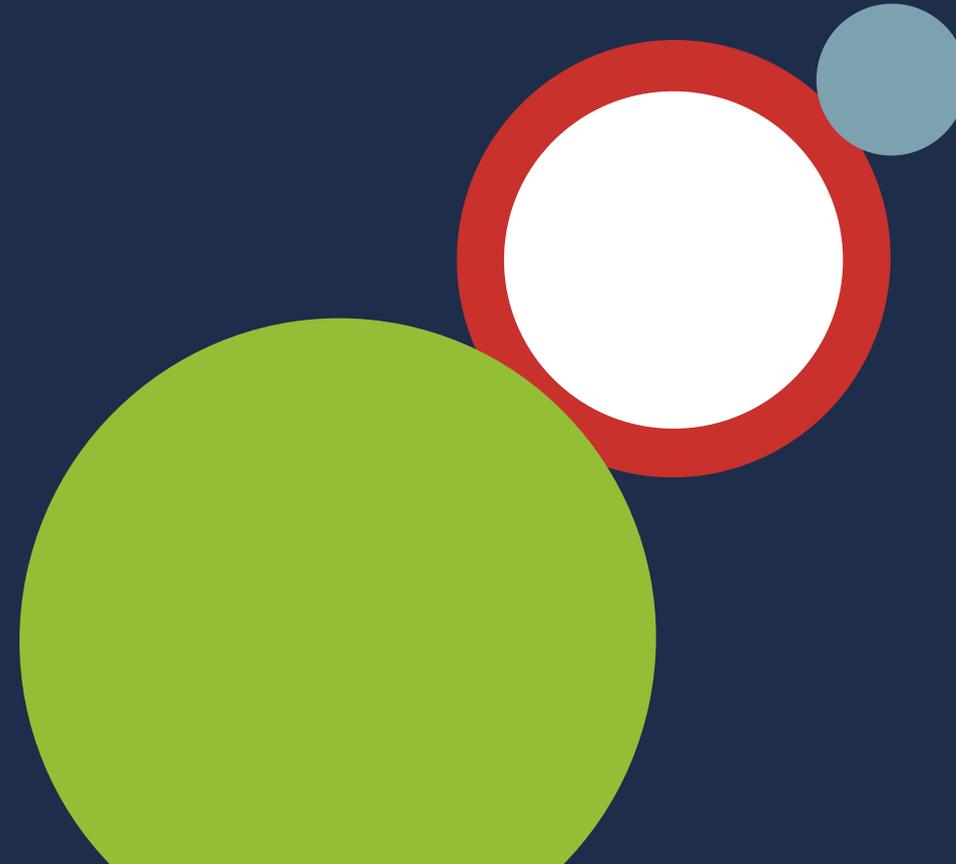
**7 administrators/ 7  
providers**

**7 men/7 women**

**Consumer Poll**  
869 respondents  
(600 likely voters  
269 oversample of  
voters of color)

**Consumer Focus  
Groups**  
60 consumers  
17 groups  
(3 groups in Spanish)

# Results Across Studies



# Topics Explored and Qualitative Themes Determined



Phase 1 Provider and Administrator Survey	Phase 2 Consumer Poll	Phase 3 Provider and Administrator Interviews	Phase 4 Consumer Focus Groups
<b>Topics Explored:</b>	<b>Topics Explored:</b>	<b>Themes Determined:</b>	<b>Themes Determined:</b>
Utilization and Reimbursement	Healthcare Quality	Telehealth and Access to Care	The Future (of Telehealth)
Payment Parity	Rural Health	Barriers to Telehealth Implementation	Getting the Word Out (how they heard about telehealth)
Patient Experiences	Telehealth Access	Telehealth's Role Post-COVID	Motivations for Choosing Telehealth
Workforce Issues	Telehealth Experiences and Opinions	What Can and Cannot Be Done Via Telehealth	What Patients Disliked About Telehealth
	Technology Use and Preferences	Parity with In-Person Visits	The Technical Side
	Broadband Access	Scheduling Logistics and No-Show Rates	Concerns About Telehealth

# Patient Access to Care

- About half (48%) of polled individuals had accessed telehealth
- Commonly-accessed services
  - Follow-up after an in-person visit
  - Medication consultation
  - Annual/regular check-up
  - Mental health services
- Telehealth was an important money- and time-saving option
- Wanted to continue to have the option and wanted better broadband access
  - Helped patients stay with the same provider
  - Especially expanded access to mental health services
- 86% of those polled supported expanding or maintaining telehealth options

# Patient Access to Care, cont.

- Patient home as the originating site:
  - They felt more comfortable
  - Associated being home with better access to care
  - Felt better able to engage with care
  - In therapy, felt better able to open up
  - Reported being more willing/able to attend visits
  - Felt better able to accommodate their children's needs



# Patient Access to Care, cont.

- How telehealth visits were offered
  - By usual care providers, employers, and insurers
  - Primarily via videoconference, some via phone
- Where and how patients accessed telehealth visits
  - Often, they were at home, though sometimes elsewhere
  - Most used a smartphone or laptop
  - Some, not all, Spanish-speaking focus group participants reported having access to interpreters



# Barriers to Care (Patients and Providers)

- Most participants had WiFi
  - Most WiFi was high-speed, but many participants called their internet “spotty” or “laggy”
  - Others were able to use multiple devices on their WiFi without difficulty
- A few people said they upgraded their internet during the COVID-19 pandemic



# Patient-specific Barriers to Care

- Patients who expressed a dislike for telehealth said:
  - It was harder to show visible health conditions on a telehealth video
  - They preferred in-person visits and felt more trust in that setting
  - They valued providers' ability to see them in their entirety or touch them
  - They valued the social aspect of attending healthcare visits in-person
  - They had negative experiences in telehealth visits, such as:
    - Providers who were distracted and not paying close attention
    - Providers who had frustrating technical difficulties



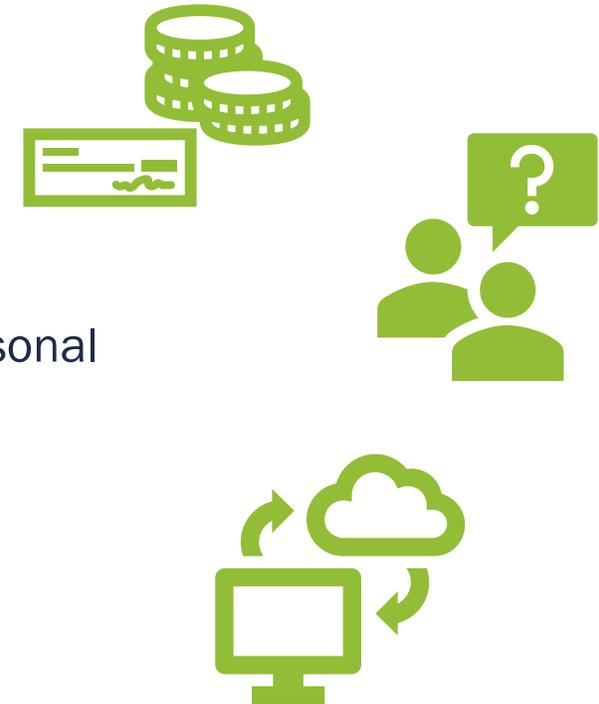
# Patient-specific Barriers to Care, cont.

- Telehealth cannot do everything
  - Sometimes needed in-person follow-ups
  - Not all care can be done via telehealth, such as lab work
- Visiting a clinic location in order to access telehealth
  - Patients found this arrangement frustrating



# Provider-specific Barriers to Care

- Provider concerns centered on:
  - Payment parity
  - Shifting telehealth reimbursement policies
  - The need for health information technology (HIT) support
- Sometimes echoed patient concerns about telehealth being less personal
- Providers had difficulties with:
  - Telehealth platforms and other HIT
  - Internet and web-enabled devices
  - Patients' tech savviness
  - Extra time and skill needed to communicate with patients about technology
- The utility of telehealth for providers varied significantly by their specialty (what services they provider)



# The Future

- Telehealth is **here** to stay
- Usage of telehealth **depends** on patients' circumstances
- Providers would like continued **attention** to the costs of providing telehealth and payment parity
- Most patients and providers want the **flexibility** to use telehealth case-by-case if together they agree it is the best option

# The Future: Suggestions from the Focus Groups

- Make telehealth a more integrated part of healthcare
- Improve care coordination between providers seeing patients via telehealth and those doing follow-up services like lab tests or home health visits
- Integrate wearables and remote patient monitoring into regular patient care
- Better coordinate across technology platforms and implement more standardization in scheduling processes, dial-in processes, and telehealth platforms
- Give better instructions for telehealth (if complex processes cannot be simplified) and, if possible, provide tech support personnel whom patients can call for help
- Improve access to broadband internet for patients and providers alike
- Ensure greater standardization and certainty in terms of costs and payor policies