

## New Poll Finds Kansas Voters Want Telehealth to Stay

[New research finds that 86% of Kansans](#) support expanding or maintaining telehealth services to access health care after the COVID-19 pandemic ends, according to a [statewide poll](#) of voters conducted in February. In 2020, the federal government, states, and private payers lifted previous restrictions on the use of telehealth to enable safe access to health care during the pandemic. Kansas moved to temporarily [expand access](#) to telehealth early in the pandemic, but those changes, popular with consumers, are set to run out before the end of 2021.

“Kansans have eagerly adopted telehealth and now choose it for everything from medication consultations, to annual check-ups, to regular therapy sessions. Protecting and expanding access to telehealth is a common-sense approach to ensure that Kansans continue to receive quality health care when and where they need it,” said United Health Ministry Fund CEO David Jordan.

The poll, conducted by GS Strategy Group, found that 48% of Kansans have utilized telehealth. Nationally, prior to the pandemic, just [11% were using telehealth](#). Kansans said they utilized telehealth for routine check-ups, mental health needs, and medication consultations, among other services.

A majority of voters say that telehealth can help to drive down health care costs without negatively impacting quality of care. Voters cited personal safety from COVID-19, access to doctors and specialists, elimination of travel, and time savings as the top reasons to use telehealth.

The poll, which reached 800 Kansas voters, found strong support for telehealth across party lines, geographies, and ages:

- 85% of Kansans think that telehealth has been helpful in meeting their care needs.
- 90% of Kansans think that telehealth is a good way to access care without taking time away from work or family.
- 92% of white voters and 95% of non-white voters think that telehealth should remain an option for patients beyond the pandemic.
- 93% of Kansans living in rural areas believe that telehealth is a good way to give patients who live far from major hospitals and specialists access to health care.

The study also found that when it comes to accessing care, 71% of non-white Kansans would prefer to see a doctor or health care professional who comes from their community, speaks their language, and looks like them.

“Telehealth eliminates transportation, childcare and time-off work barriers, which saves Kansans time and money. Instead of driving miles out of their way to see a specialist, they can talk to a provider on the device of their choice, from the comfort of their homes,” said Brenda Sharpe, President and CEO of the REACH Healthcare Foundation. “It’s clear that consumers overwhelmingly now want and expect the flexibility and ease of telehealth for their health care needs.”

Most Kansans accessed telehealth services via an audio or video call from their home on their computer, laptop, or smartphone. In addition, the research found that 85% of Kansans support the continued ability to see providers from their home and on the platform or device of their choosing—something that would be eliminated if the current telehealth expansions are not continued.

This survey builds on previous [research](#) conducted by the Health Ministry Fund in conjunction with the University of Kansas School of Medicine, which showed a need to explore how to make telehealth services sustainable for providers as well as consumers.

*The survey was funded by the United Methodist Health Ministry Fund and REACH Healthcare Foundation, and conducted via telephone by GS Strategy Group in February 2021, with N=600 likely voters in Kansas, plus an oversample of N=200 non-white voters in Kansas, with a margin of error of +/-4%. Full survey, methodology and findings are available upon request.*

*For more information, please contact:*

*David Jordan, United Methodist Health Ministry Fund, [david@healthfund.org](mailto:david@healthfund.org), 508.246.6825*

*Brenda Sharpe, REACH Healthcare Foundation, [brenda@reachhealth.org](mailto:brenda@reachhealth.org), 913.568.8113*