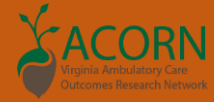




## Telehealth critical for access to primary care, but only with adequate payment



Telehealth has been available for years but became a critical tool for the delivery of primary care at the start of the pandemic. Reimbursement parity allowed many patients to access telehealth through both video and telephone visits. Telehealth has key advantages, including improving access to care for patients who are unable to travel, reducing unnecessary exposure to the healthcare setting during the pandemic, and reducing burden on nursing staff.

To understand primary care capacity in Virginia, including use of telehealth, we used data from the All-Payer Claims Database and National Plan and Provider Enumeration System to identify every primary care clinician and practice in the Commonwealth. We then surveyed all practices in 2018 and again in 2022, with a 30% and 23% response rate, respectively.

### Telehealth has been widely used and accepted during the pandemic



**1 in 10**  
primary care visits  
use telehealth

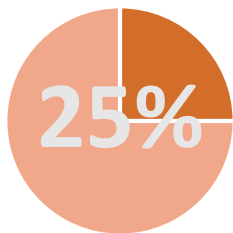


**71%**  
of practices say their  
patients like video visits

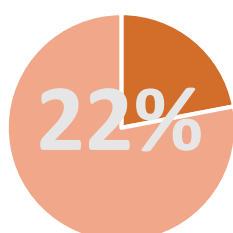


**61%**  
of practices say their  
clinicians like video visits

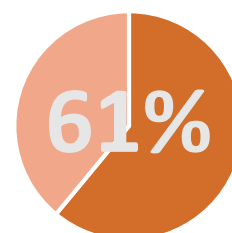
### Telehealth improves access yet practices worry about sustainability



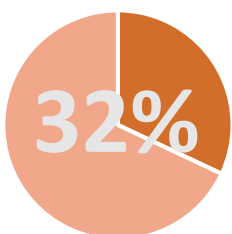
of practices **see more patients** due to video visits



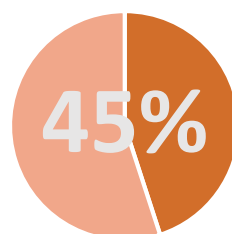
of practices provide the **same level of care** for most services by using telehealth



of practices are worried that reimbursement will be **discontinued**

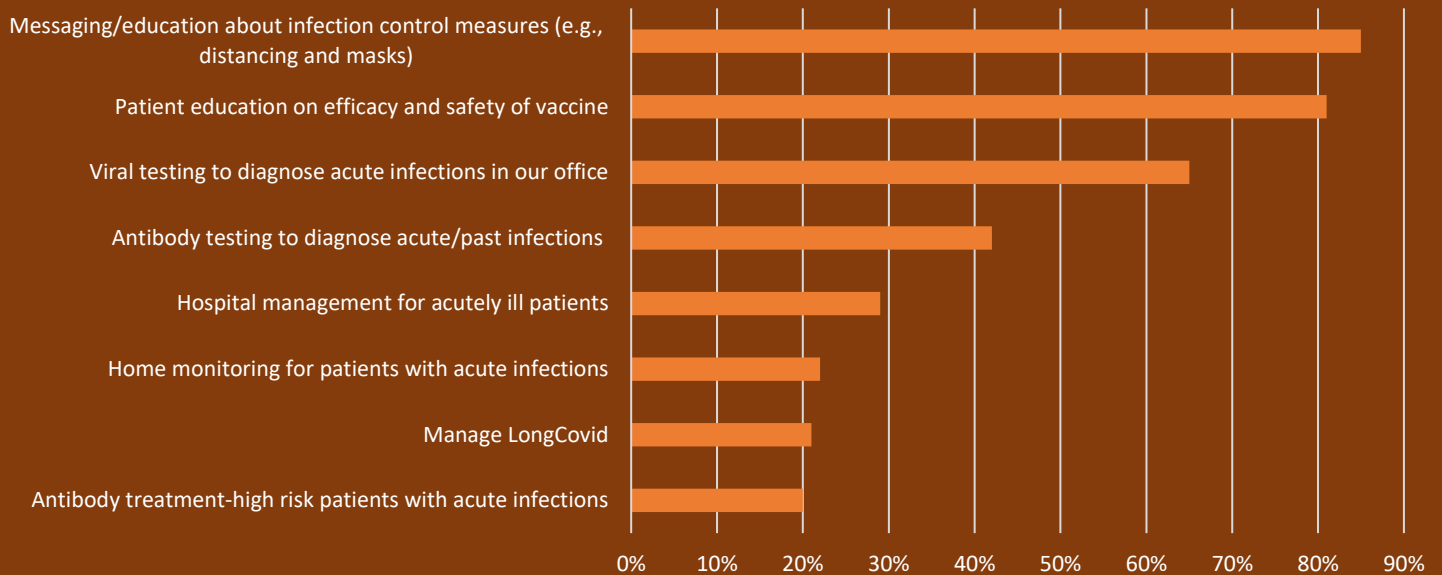


of practices report **fewer missed appointments** when patients are scheduled for video visits

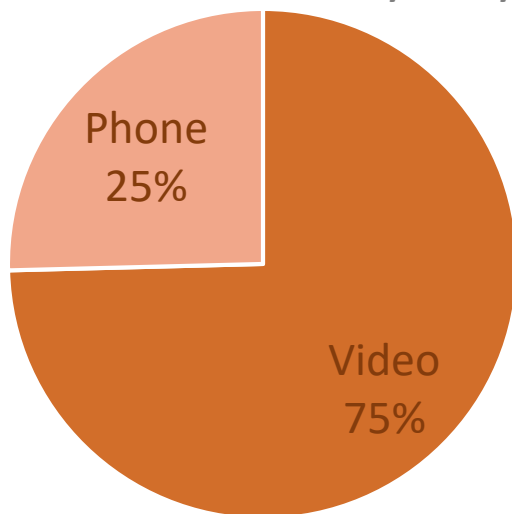


of practices report they **don't plan to continue promoting** video visits

## Varied services provided during the pandemic using telehealth



## Breakdown of telehealth by visit type



### Telephone visits are key to telehealth

**25%** of visits are telephone only

**53%** of practices report patients have difficulty accessing video visits

**64%** of practices report patients' internet connections limits video visits

**17%** of practices report patients don't want video visits

## Implications

- Telehealth improves access to a wide variety of primary care services and is accepted by patients and clinicians
- Telehealth allows clinicians to provide care for more patients
- Adequate reimbursement for telephone encounters is critical to maintain equitable access to primary care telehealth services
- Payment for telehealth and telephone encounters must be in the context of an established doctor-patient relationship with the opportunity for in-person evaluation as 10-20% of virtual visits get converted to in-person