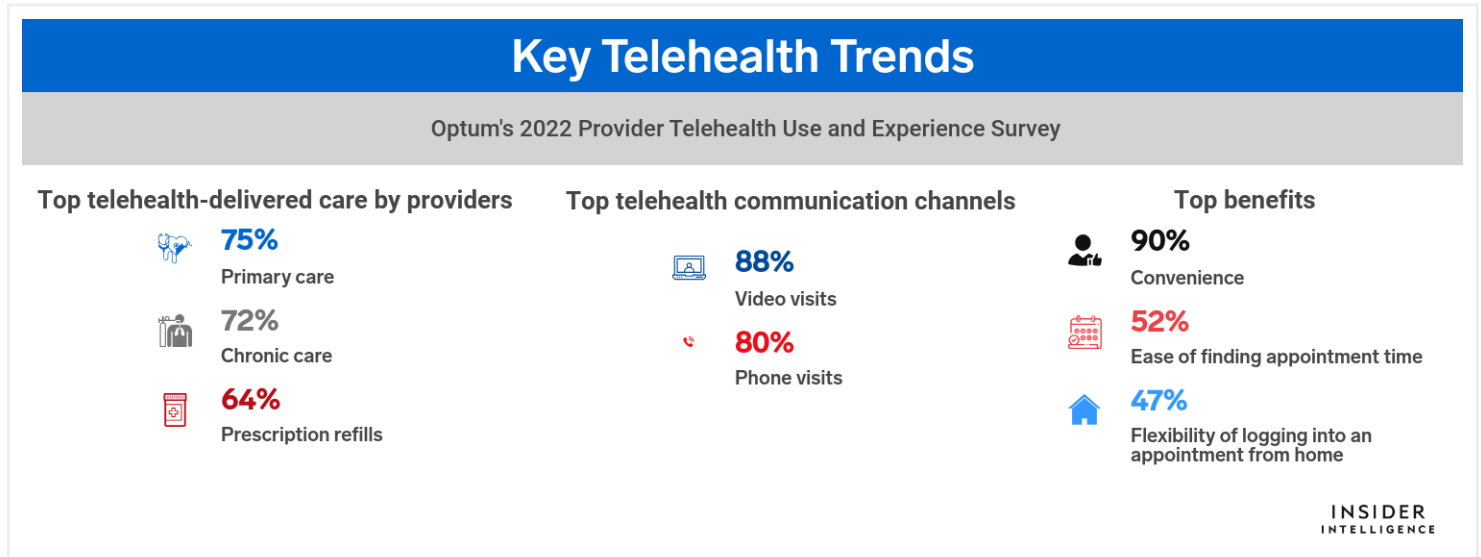


A window into how doctors are using telehealth—and where there's room for improvement

Article

The data: Optum's new "Provider telehealth use and experience [survey](#)," reveals how providers view use cases for telehealth and how most plan to continue to use telehealth post-pandemic. The survey was conducted via Qualtrics between October 25-November 2, 2021, and it had 240 healthcare provider respondents across different specialties.



How we got here: The pandemic accelerated telehealth's takeover in healthcare and highlighted some benefits for lower costs and better healthcare delivery.

Virtual care can help reduce repetitive care—and the resources and costs that come along with it. An estimated **5% to 10%** of records in most hospitals are duplicate—which leads to wasteful spending and greater risk for medical errors. Many virtual care platforms avoid duplicative care (and the subsequent spending) by using AI tech to support providers' communication and decision-making.

Telehealth appointments enable more consistent care checkpoints sans the burden of in-person appointments. This is especially impactful for managing chronic conditions and preventing health conditions from snowballing into something more costly.

Easy access to patient communication and data can also help prevent expensive ER visits. Telehealth enables providers and patients alike to have a direct line to each other, so health concerns can be addressed promptly before they become more cumbersome to treat.

But there are areas for improvement: Namely interoperability and EHR integration.

For one, improved **interoperability** will be key to providing both patients and providers with a streamlined user experience. Virtual care services can vary from provider to provider, so it's important that patient data isn't left in silos and that different clinicians can easily access the data they need to seamlessly coordinate care.

As virtual care becomes more integrated with different digital health tools (like AI for predictive health analytics or remote patient monitoring), providers face the burden of having to learn how to use new tech and fit it into their workflows, on top of their existing admin burden.

The big takeaway: Optum's survey results echo our own [telehealth survey](#) results from the same time period.

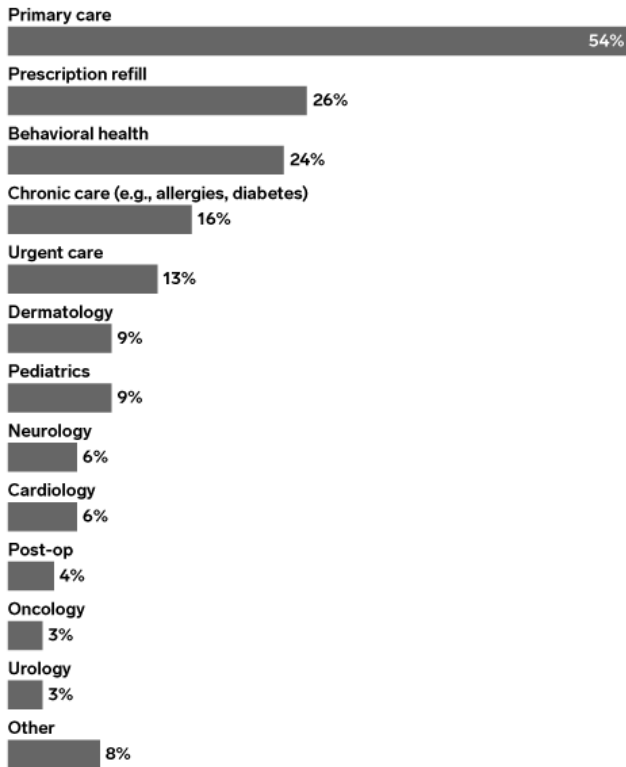
- Our survey [found](#) that **primary care (54%)**, **prescription refills (26%)**, and **chronic care (16%)** were top-used healthcare services via telehealth, according to 1,510 US telehealth users ages 18-75.
- The most valuable features of telehealth services were ones that boasted convenience: [77%](#) of telehealth users considered the ability to schedule visits online extremely/very valuable.
- And [video and audio calls \(>50%\)](#) were the leading communication means through which telehealth users conducted their virtual visits.

This further proves that telehealth is a strong competitive edge for providers—and those that don't keep up could get swept away by the virtual care wave.

Dig deeper: Check out our [US Telehealth Trends 2022 report](#) to learn more about what consumers want from virtual care and how providers and insurers can make it happen.

Healthcare Services that US Telehealth Users Have Accessed via Telehealth, by Type, Oct 2021

% of respondents



Note: n=1,519 ages 18-75

Source: Insider Intelligence, "US Telehealth Trends 2022," Jan 2022

271712

[InsiderIntelligence.com](https://www.insiderintelligence.com)