

# Telehealth raised the bar for consumers' healthcare expectations

Article

**The news:** Consumers are generally satisfied with their virtual care interactions, but increased market competition means the standard has been raised for providers to deliver an optimal telehealth experience.

These were the key takeaways from two consumer-focused telehealth surveys fielded in October—one from America's Health Insurance Plans (AHIP) and NORC at the University of

Chicago, and the other from Software Advice.

**Digging into the data:** Convenience, easier appointment availability, and less time spent waiting for doctors are pulling consumers away from in-person visits and toward virtual ones.

- **Long wait times are patients' top complaint (49%) with in-person medical visits. 89% say they usually miss at least an hour of work** to attend the appointment, according to **Software Advice's** survey.
- Comparatively, wait times didn't make the list of consumer complaints for virtual care visits. And **71%** of respondents said they typically **miss less than an hour of work** for telehealth appointments.
- **69%** of virtual care users said **telehealth services** have been most helpful because they were **unable to find an in-person appointment or their doctor's office was closed**, per AHIP's survey.

Most patients are pleased with the access that telehealth provides, the care they're getting, and the experience of the visit, the survey data showed.

- **60%** of respondents said they're **satisfied with the telehealth care** they've received, per AHIP.
- **78%** said **telehealth made it easier** for them to seek out care when they need it and **85%** said there is a sufficient number of virtual care physicians available to them to address their needs, this survey found.
- **45%** of patients said they **don't experience any pain points with telehealth** appointments, compared with only **21%** who said their in-person visits are hassle-free, per Software Advice.

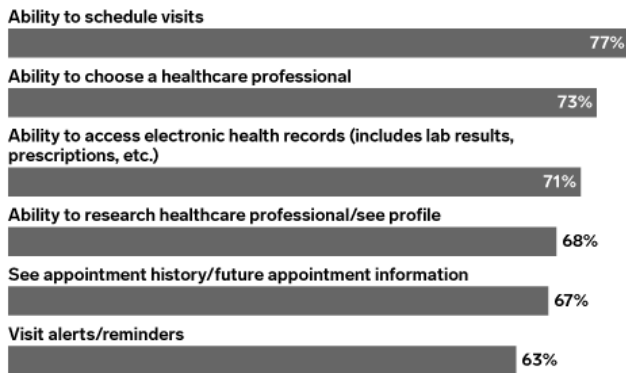
**But virtual care providers shouldn't get too comfortable:** The convenience and flexibility telehealth offers showed patients how fast and efficient getting care could be. Expectations will keep rising, and consumers won't sit tight if the experience isn't up to their new standards —especially considering the plethora of options now available.

- Telehealth services are typically used for low-acuity, non-complex care, leading **retailers, startups, Big Tech firms, and insurers** to challenge incumbents for a piece of the pie.
- Intense market competition means providers must be on top of their game: **56%** of patients said a **negative experience with a doctor has led them to find a different one**, and **30%** have done this multiple times, per Software Advice's survey.

- Telehealth providers can [improve the patient experience](#) by offering consumer-friendly features such as **online scheduling and bill-pay, physician selection, transparent pricing, and live tech support.**

### Pre-Visit Telehealth Service Features that US Telehealth Users\* Consider Extremely/Very Valuable, Oct 2021

% of respondents



Note: n=1,609 ages 18-75; respondents were given the choice of "extremely valuable," "very valuable," "moderately valuable," "slightly valuable," and "not valuable"; \*94% were telehealth users and 6% were potential telehealth users selected to align with the US population on the criteria of age  
Source: Insider Intelligence, "US Telehealth Trends 2022," Jan 1, 2022

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