

# CVS' new virtual primary care service inches it closer to becoming a healthcare giant

Article

**The news:** CVS Health [is rolling out](#) a virtual care solution next year to eligible Aetna and Caremark members. The service will allow consumers to get care at a retail clinic, virtually, or

in their home.

The offering, **CVS Health Virtual Primary Care**, is being sold to Aetna fully-insured, self-insured plan sponsors, as well as clients of Caremark, CVS' pharmacy benefit manager. Eligible members can start using the service next year.

**How we got here:** CVS' telehealth offerings currently include e-clinic and video visit services for general medical care and some chronic disease management. Aetna has offered virtual care solutions for its members for the past decade.

- Last year, CVS and its Aetna health plan arm **launched** their first co-branded virtual primary care solution (powered by **Teladoc**) to self-funded employers nationwide.
- This service promises free copays for all telehealth visits and select in-person ones for Aetna members, once deductibles are kicked in.

**More on the new offering:** CVS Health Virtual Primary Care gives Aetna's and Caremark's customers another option to roll out to their members—approximately **110 million in total**.

- Members will be able to receive a variety of services virtually, **including primary care, chronic condition management, and mental health support**. Members can then choose to have an in-person visit at an in-network provider, if needed.
- CVS' press release is light on details regarding the program's at-home services, though **president and CEO Karen Lynch** **hinted** at such expansion during the company's 2021 investor day in December.
- Patients' data will be stored on a **dedicated EHR platform**, which can be accessed by CVS care team providers and outside physicians.

**The bigger picture:** This is yet another move that beefs up CVS' hybrid care delivery strategy as the retail giant evolves into a healthcare giant.

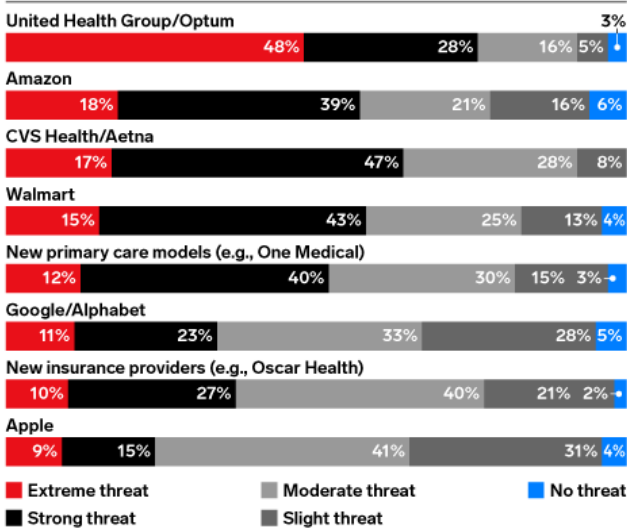
By intertwining its retail, insurance, and pharmacy divisions, CVS wants more consumers using its healthcare services.

- Even though CVS **plans** to **close the doors on nearly 10% of its US locations** throughout the next three years, the company wants to become a **front door for care** by converting its remaining stores to primary care-like offices.

- Consumers are growing more comfortable with CVS as a healthcare destination due to the pandemic. The company **administered** more than **32 million COVID-19 tests** and **over 59 million COVID-19 vaccines** in 2021.
- Plus, CVS **went from** supporting **10,000 virtual mental health visits** in 2019 to **10 million** in 2021.

**Degree of Competitive Threat Posed by Select Companies to US Hospitals and Health Systems According to US Health Executives, Summer 2021**

% of respondents



Note: over the next five years  
 Source: Kaufman Hall, "State of Consumerism in Healthcare 2021: Regaining Momentum," Sep 8, 2021

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