

US telemedicine users will surpass 40 million this year

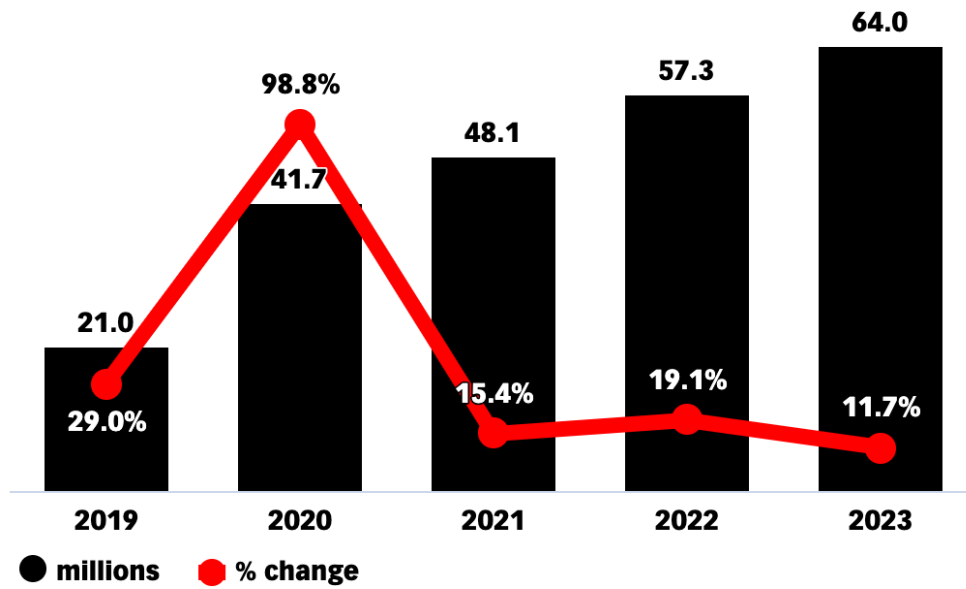
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This year, 41.7 million adults in the US will use telemedicine, representing 98.8% growth from a year prior, according to our latest estimates.

Telemedicine Users

US, 2019-2023



Source: eMarketer, October 2020

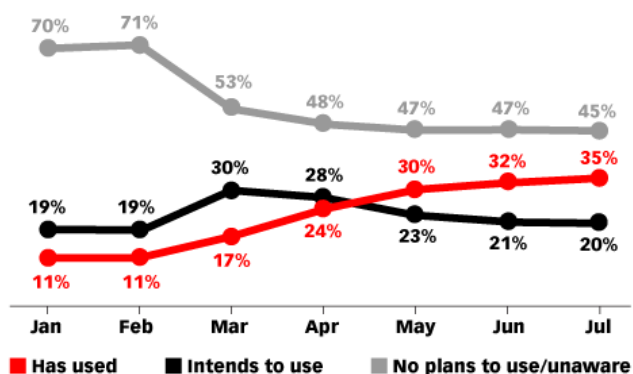
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We expect this behavior to stick and for growth to continue through the end of our forecast period in 2023, when the number of users will be more than triple that of 2019. By the end of 2023, there will be 64.0 million telemedicine users.

Data from CivicScience published in July also signals a change in telemedicine adoption. For example, in January, just 11% of US adults said they had used telemedicine. That figure more than tripled by July. During that same time period, the percentage of respondents who reported having no plans to use telemedicine—or simply no awareness of it—decreased by 25 percentage points.

Coronavirus Impact: US Adults' Experience with Telemedicine, Jan 2020-July 2020

% of respondents



Note: ages 18+; numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding
Source: CivicScience as cited in company blog, July 27, 2020

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In the same survey, CivicScience looked to gauge the quality of telemedicine visits relative to in-person visits. While more than half of US adults who had tried telemedicine said the quality was lower, a substantial share (42%) said it was about the same. This not only means that telemedicine is working for many people who have tried it, but it also indicates there are opportunities for improvement.

How Do US Adults* Rate the Quality of Their Telemedicine Care Compared with In-Person Doctor Visits?

% of respondents, July 2020



Note: n=2,691 ages 18+ who have tried telemedicine
Source: CivicScience as cited in company blog, July 27, 2020

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“Telemedicine adoption has grown exponentially since the advent of COVID-19,” said Rini Mukhopadhyay, eMarketer forecasting analyst at Insider Intelligence. “Historically, US consumers have been a little slow to adopt telemedicine due to their lack of insurance and concerns over the quality of telemedicine visits. However, slowly, more consumers are willing to adapt to the unique characteristics of seeing a health professional digitally.”

Consumer willingness to try out telemedicine has been driven by a mix of factors: People are looking for ways to see their healthcare providers while under quarantine, and the federal government changed its policies amid the pandemic to make telehealth services more accessible.

What's more, an increasing number of health insurance companies are now accepting most telehealth bills, including for primary and emergency care. Over the past few months, telemedicine has also seen technological advancements. Tech companies and startups are building apps and platforms to make the overall patient experience—from booking a visit to interacting with physicians—as seamless as possible.

We expect telemedicine technology to make even more strides in the future.

"There are possibilities in real-time audio and video, as well as store-and-forward technology and artificial intelligence (AI). These technologies have been on the rise in recent years," Mukhopadhyay said.