

Why telehealth is primed to gain even more momentum in 2022 and beyond

Article

The data: Cigna's recently published study highlights how virtual care can cut healthcare costs.

It analyzed its health subsidiary **MDLive's** telehealth data and found the following:

- Virtual visits can **save consumers as much as \$141 per visit** when compared with an in-person urgent care visit, and \$120 on a specialist visit.
- **Patients who had virtual visits had 19% fewer ER or urgent care visits** than those who didn't have any virtual visits.

3 ways virtual care saves money:

1. Reducing repetitive care

- 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 spending) by using AI tech to support providers' communication and decision-making.

2. Minimizing misdiagnoses

- Providers can quickly and easily access patient data through centralized digital dashboards instead of having to jump through multiple hoops, order unnecessary tests, and having an unorganized pool of data to make clinical decisions from.

3. Preventing ER visits

- Patients can more easily and quickly access virtual visits than physical appointments—so they're not delaying care to the point that they'd need a trip to the ER.
- At the same time, providers can have a more direct line to connect patients via video visits or chat, so health concerns can be addressed promptly before they snowball into something more dire later on.

Why consumers want virtual care: Convenience and lower costs.

- Virtual visits allow for no wait-times, documentation is streamlined online, and consumers don't have to spend time, energy, and money traveling to their appointments. Instead, they can easily access their appointment from the comfort of their homes.
- In fact, **66.5% of US adults surveyed preferred at least some virtual visits in the future**, and 20.1% said they preferred video visits over in-person visits (but less said so if out-of-pocket

costs for virtual care were higher than in-person care), [per](#) a 2021 JAMA survey of 2,000 US adults conducted by RAND Corporation.

- Since telehealth visits are usually more affordable than in-person visits, consumers are willing to choose the virtual option. **Lower cost was a top reason for using telehealth among consumers**—particularly among Gen Zers (38%) and millennials (28%), [per](#) our 2021 Telehealth Trend survey.

What Are the Top Reasons for Using or Planning to Use Telehealth Services According to US Telehealth Users*?

% of respondents, by generation, Oct 2021

	Gen Z (18-24)	Millennials (25-40)	Gen X (41-56)	Baby boomers (57-75)
Reduced risk of transmitting/ contracting contagious diseases	48%	46%	55%	62%
Ability to make an appointment quickly	44%	43%	34%	23%
Less time waiting to be seen by a healthcare professional	38%	44%	48%	48%
Lower cost (e.g., no copays)	38%	28%	25%	24%
Travel time	32%	37%	44%	46%
Ability to receive quality care	24%	25%	18%	16%
More time spent with a healthcare professional	17%	18%	14%	16%
Default option offered by my healthcare professional/practice of choice	16%	15%	10%	14%
Recommendation from someone I trust	13%	14%	8%	6%
Platform's suite of features	7%	10%	4%	2%
Other	1%	1%	4%	5%

Note: *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 2022

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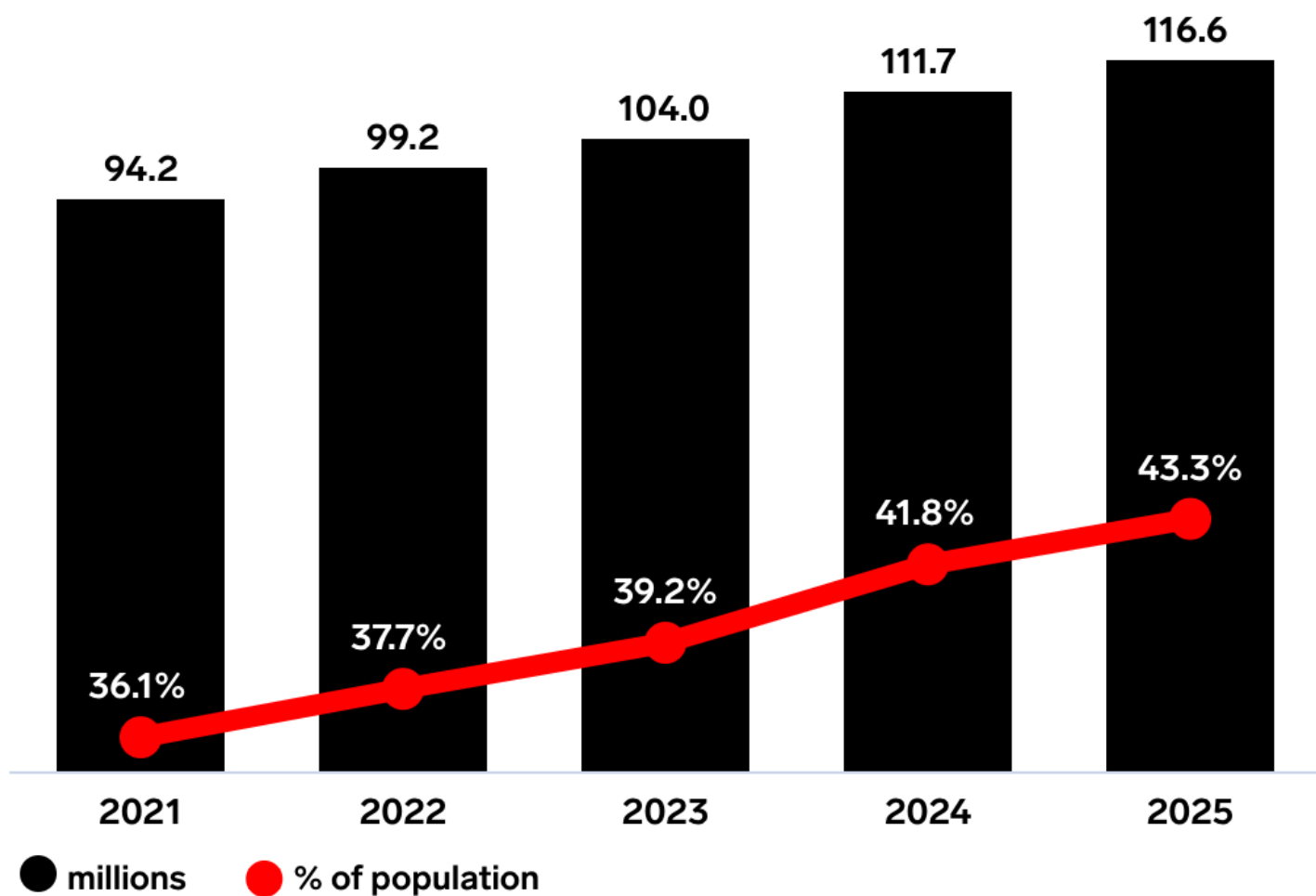
What's next? We'll see telehealth become more of a concrete part of healthcare considering its ROI potential for health systems and hospitals contending with staff shortage crises and [rising](#) healthcare spending.

As of summer 2021, most US health systems and hospitals already had virtual care capabilities in place:

- 78% offer direct-to-consumer video visits, 61% offer online scheduling, and 40% are partnering with thirty party digital health vendors to improve patients' digital experience, [per](#) KaufmanHall's September 2021 report.

Telehealth Users

US, 2021-2025



Source: eMarketer, August 2021

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