

Digging into the areas of digital health that remain sticky in a post-vax reality

Article

The data: Consumer attitudes about healthcare have shifted dramatically over the last year as the pandemic incited a reliance on digital health tech—adoption shot up as a result, but not all digital health tech is remaining sticky in the post-vaccine universe. A recently released [report](#) by Experian Health sheds light on how patient and provider attitudes about digital health have changed between November 2020 and June 2021.

- **Demand for online self-scheduling tools hasn't gone away. 73% of healthcare consumers 18+ said they want to be able to schedule their own appointments online in June, versus 78% last November.**
- **Far fewer people would put off in-person care now than that would last fall.** In November 2020, **58% of healthcare consumers** said they'd wait until COVID-19 dies down before rescheduling a visit or procedure—but in June, that number plummeted down to just **19%**.
- **Meanwhile, provider and patient appetite for telehealth is shrinking, but they still find the tech valuable.** In November 2020, **59% of providers** thought telehealth would become a permanent feature in healthcare, but that **dropped to 49%** in June. At the same time, even though Experian Health notes that demand from patients has also dwindled, **one-third still say they want to be able to communicate with their providers remotely.**

The bigger picture: It's not surprising that online scheduling remains important to healthcare consumers and that telehealth visits are waning.

Telehealth was a necessary pivot most providers had to make during the pandemic. Most providers make money on a fee-for-service business model, so they had no choice but to adopt telehealth to maintain patient volumes and stay afloat.

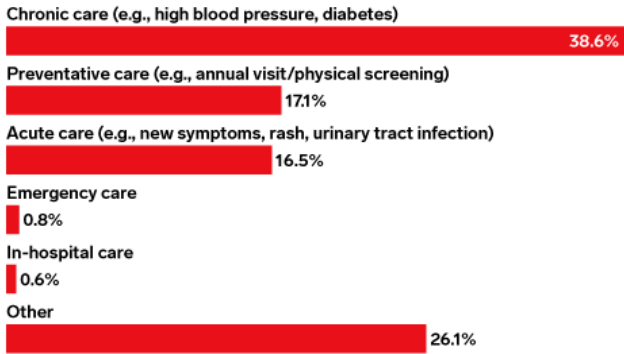
That also meant patients were left with virtual options to connect with their care teams. But now that vaccination efforts are underway, those who prefer to engage with their doctors in-person feel more comfortable doing so. But telehealth adoption is still far higher than it was before March 2020. This is because patients were forced to engage with telehealth, for the first time in many cases, and they experienced its convenience first-hand. So, the tech is becoming a more permanent fixture in healthcare even if adoption rates are nowhere near where they were at the height of the pandemic.

Even as in-person visits increase, online scheduling tools aren't going anywhere. The convenience factor is something that patients won't want to ditch. Plus, online scheduling can help providers reduce admin errors, denied claims, no-shows, gaps in care, and all the costs associated with these issues.

What's next? As digital health tools make healthcare more personalized, we could see online-scheduling tools level-up with AI tools that help plan visits in advance to ensure timely care according to a patient's health needs, and pairing with telehealth tools to make the most of provider-patient face time.

Telehealth Services Received Most Recently Among US Telehealth Users, Feb 2021

% of respondents



Note: ages 18+; among those who had at least one telehealth encounter during March 1, 2020-Jan 30, 2021
Source: The COVID-19 Healthcare Coalition, "Telehealth Impact: Patient Survey Analysis," April 11, 2021

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