

TELEHEALTH DURING COVID-19 AND BEYOND

From 28 to 800,000 telemedicine visits in record time, WellMed is changing the face of health care.

When the COVID-19 virus threatened people's health around the world beginning in 2020, many health care organizations employed telemedicine to address the new normal of social distancing, quarantine and self-isolation. WellMed, a leading health care delivery organization serving Medicare-eligible patients, launched a number of innovative telemedicine programs in the early days of the pandemic.



Today, telemedicine continues to flourish at WellMed and cater to the needs of patients. With more than 800,000 visits on the books before year-end 2022, WellMed and patients are realizing the enormous benefit of telemedicine.

By providing health care to seniors when they need it via on-demand appointments and where they want it via smart tablets delivered to their homes, WellMed is ensuring patients receive needed care, reducing the number of costly emergency room visits and easing the burden on caregivers.

When it comes to timeliness and convenience, telemedicine appointments have WellMed patients responding with two thumbs up. Available as both on-demand and scheduled visits, telemedicine provides patients another way in which to see their doctor quickly and to get the care they need. For on-demand telemedicine

visits, 90.5% of patients reported they had an excellent experience, and for scheduled appointments, the percentage is 94.4.

“Bravo to our team at WellMed for connecting with the communities we serve more than 800,000 times via telemedicine.”

-Eric Gardner, SVP of innovation and transformation for WellMed

“From humble beginnings of 28 visits in five months prior to COVID, to being a staple of our practice at more than 50,000 visits a month, we have evolved as a practice, and our seniors have too,” said Eric Gardner, SVP of innovation and transformation.



A telemedicine strategy

During the height of COVID-19, WellMed acted quickly to develop an interdisciplinary team of more than 10,000 clinicians, care advocates, support personnel and transportation professionals. A core team established and implemented a robust telemedicine strategy that employed multiple telemedicine platforms:

- MyHealthLightNow telemedicine provides online access to a patient's medical team through a smartphone, tablet, or video- and internet-enabled computer. Patients can call their clinic to register for an online doctor visit. The patient attends the online doctor visit by going to www.MyHealthLightNow.com.
- WellMed serves an older population of patients who may be uncomfortable with technology or who don't have financial means to afford a smart phone, tablet or other personal device to participate in telemedicine. For these patients, WellMed provides network-connected tablets so patients can meet with a health care provider face-to-face online.
- Physicians and advanced practice clinicians (nurse practitioners and physician assistants) provide 24/7 on-demand telemedicine visits.

The telemedicine program offers a convenient and user-friendly platform that allows a patient to see their provider from their home, whether or not they have a digitally connected device. WellMed is improving access to health care for a population that might not otherwise have it.

"At WellMed, we feel a great sense of accomplishment that patients can connect with their providers with technology," said Cindy Johnston, MD, MS, CPC, CMQ, chief of medical affairs for WellMed.

PROGRAM GOALS:



Provide chronic, acute and transitional care services to a defined and targeted patient population.



Improve patient outcomes and engagement.



Improve provider satisfaction.



Reduce the cost-of-care delivery by facilitating improved access to care.



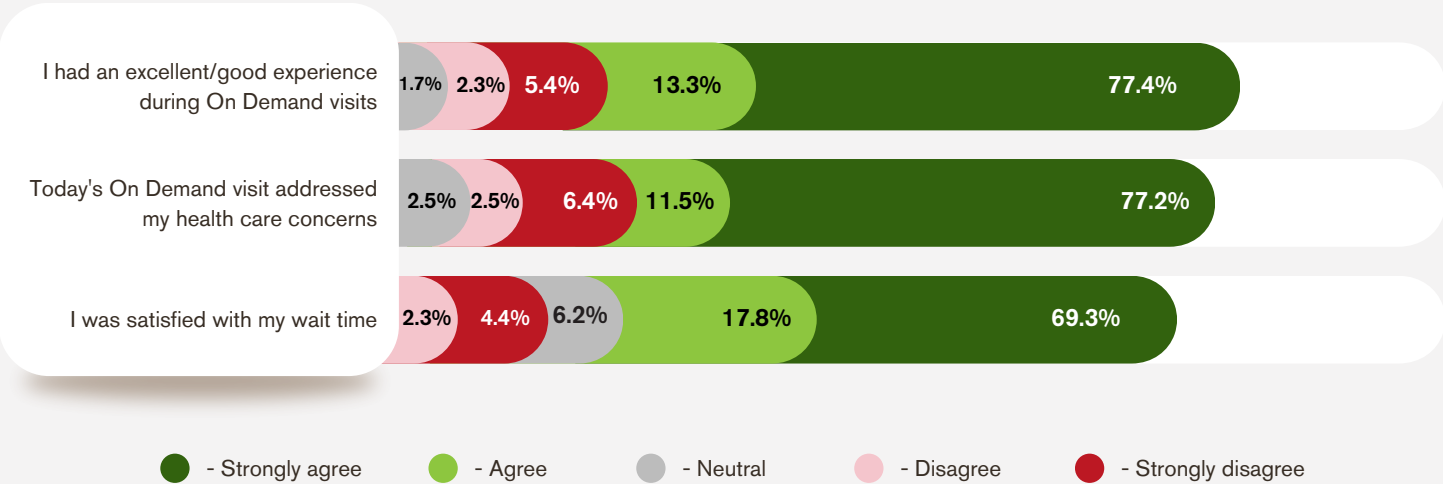
Reduce unnecessary ER visits, hospital admissions and urgent care visits.

Telemedicine results to date

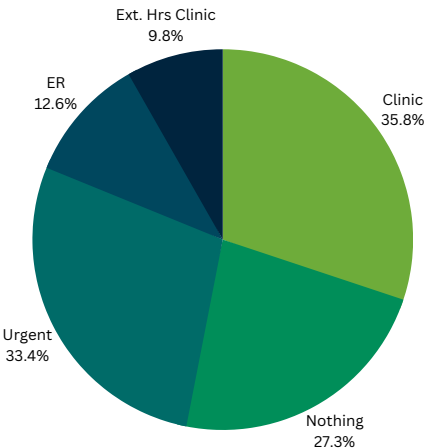
The telemedicine program expansion began in March 2020. In its first month, 2,113 patients used the technology for visits. That number rose to more than 53,000 per month, and 373,000+ total for 2020. Now, as of December 2022, that number has risen to more than 800,000.

Not only has the volume ballooned, patients have expressed their acceptance and appreciation of the available service, both scheduled and on demand.

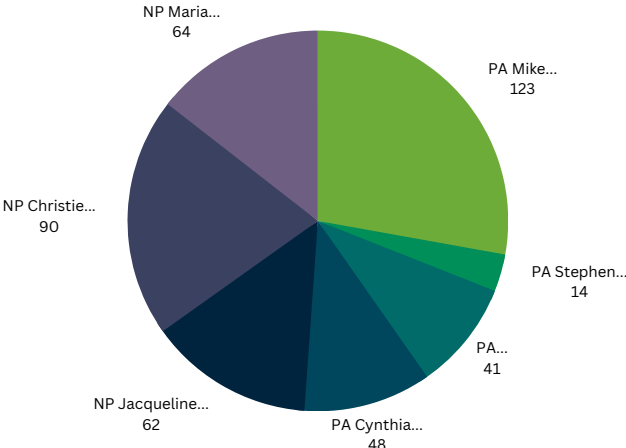
Patient survey results:



If On Demand visit was not available, which of these would you have used?



Who did you see for your MHLN On Demand visit?





For on-demand telemedicine visits, 90.5% of patients reported they had an excellent experience, and for scheduled appointments, the percentage is 94.4. When asked if their telemedicine appointment addressed their concerns, 88.7% of on-demand patients agreed or strongly agreed. For scheduled appointments, 96.5% of patients agreed or strongly agreed.

“Patients and caregivers who might otherwise be discouraged from seeking medical care can participate in a telemedicine visit and feel safe,” Dr. Johnston said.

“Our interdisciplinary telehealth model and enterprise-wide efforts truly changed the way medicine is delivered in our organization.”

