Expansion of Telehealth during COVID-19 Pandemic

On March 13, 2020, a United States national emergency was declared due to COVID-19. With many states issuing stay-at-home orders, healthcare organizations have decreased in-person office visits and increased telehealth visits.

We use summary level data aggregated from electronic medical records at 22 health systems in the United States, spanning 17 states and covering 7 million patients to compare data from March 15, 2019-April 14, 2019 with data from March 15, 2020-April 14, 2020. We found that telehealth visits increased 300-fold in this timeframe in 2020, and adoption of telehealth was consistent across adult age groups.

However, this increase has not offset the decrease of in-person office visits, as the total number of in-person and telehealth visits is still down over 50% in our year-over-year comparison. This information may be helpful as organizations continue to look to telehealth to support areas that previously may have relied on in-person visits, as well as for policy makers looking to understand the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on health system volumes.
### Term | Definition
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**Telehealth Visits** | Visits with real-time audio and video communication between a patient and a healthcare provider, as consistent with CMS guidelines.

**Office Visits** | Any in-person outpatient visit