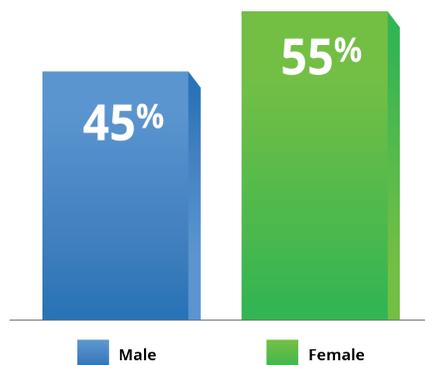


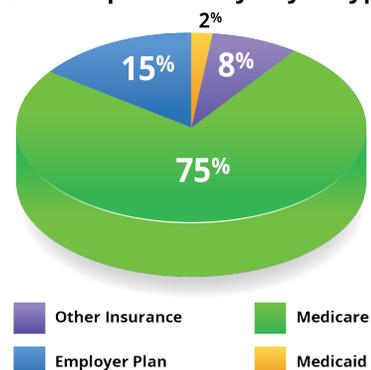
Telehealth Index: 2019 Senior Consumer Survey

American Well's new senior consumer survey finds that the 65+ age demographic is more willing to use telehealth than previously thought. While seniors are still healthcare traditionalists in many ways, they have unique care needs and consumption trends that align with what telehealth can deliver. This eBook examines seniors' healthcare trends and their sentiments toward telehealth, and identifies how healthcare organizations can build telehealth programs unique to this population. American Well commissioned Harris Poll to conduct an online study among over 2,000 adults to measure usage and sentiments toward telehealth. The results are weighted to be representative of the American adult population across standard demographics. Of the 2,002 adults surveyed, 20% were seniors over the age of 65, and this eBook focuses on that percentage of the population. Below is a breakdown of the senior demographic surveyed:

Senior Population by Gender



Senior Population by Payer Type



Here's what we found:

- More than half of seniors are willing to use telehealth
- Seniors want to use telehealth for prescription renewals and chronic care management
- They're loyal to their PCPs and health plans
- Reimbursement and preference for in-person care are main barriers to adoption
- Seniors are more likely to use the ER for urgent care
- Seniors delay care, even for serious issues

More than half of seniors are willing to use telehealth

Not surprisingly, current senior utilization of telehealth is low. Only 1% of seniors have ever had an online doctor's visit, compared to 15% for ages 18-44. However, 52% of seniors are willing to have a telehealth visit. That means that of the 47.8 million Americans over the age of 65¹, 24.85 million are willing to use telehealth.

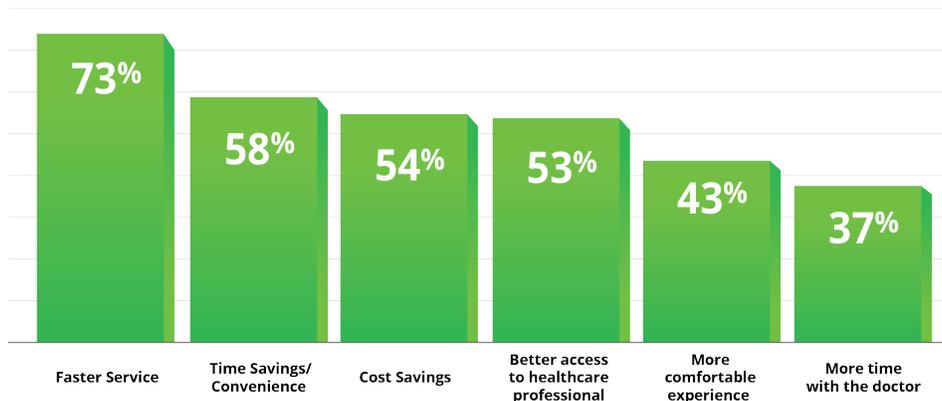


This insight presents a tremendous opportunity for health plans interested in engaging Medicare Advantage members in telehealth, but first they need to understand what is driving senior willingness to use telehealth, what is preventing it, and what they should do to promote telehealth adoption among the population.

Seniors believe telehealth can deliver faster, more convenient care

Seniors value quicker access to healthcare services more than any other age demographic, and this is the main driver behind their willingness to use telehealth. In fact, 73% of seniors said they were willing to use telehealth to receive care faster, compared to just 55% of millennials. Seniors also view telehealth as a way to save time (58%) and money (54%), and gain better access to providers (53%).

Why would you be willing to have an online video visit with a doctor?



Seniors want to use telehealth for prescription renewals and chronic care

Of the seniors who are willing to use telehealth, 84% said they would use it for prescription renewals. Having a video visit for something as simple as a prescription renewal aligns with seniors' desire for faster, more convenient care. It also promotes cost savings. According to McKinsey & Company, 45% of seniors are willing to use generic drugs.² Offering generic prescription renewals through telehealth can further optimize cost savings for health plans while providing convenient, high-quality care to members.

Another healthcare service that seniors are willing to use telehealth for is the management of chronic diseases. In fact, 67% of seniors said they were open to using video visits to manage their chronic conditions. This is important, as 87% of seniors have at least one chronic disease and 68% of Medicare beneficiaries have multiple chronic conditions.^{3, 4} Treatment of people with chronic conditions, the majority of whom are seniors, accounts for 86% of the country's total healthcare costs.⁵ Telehealth is a tool health plans can use to drive down chronic care costs, and seniors are receptive to using it.

Seniors are also interested in telehealth for surgery or in-patient follow-up care. Receiving follow-up care via telehealth is convenient, easy and a more comfortable experience—all things seniors find important.

Seniors Are Willing To Use Telehealth For:

PRESCRIPTION REFILLS

84%

CHRONIC CARE MANAGEMENT

67%

SURGERY OR IN-PATIENT FOLLOW-UP

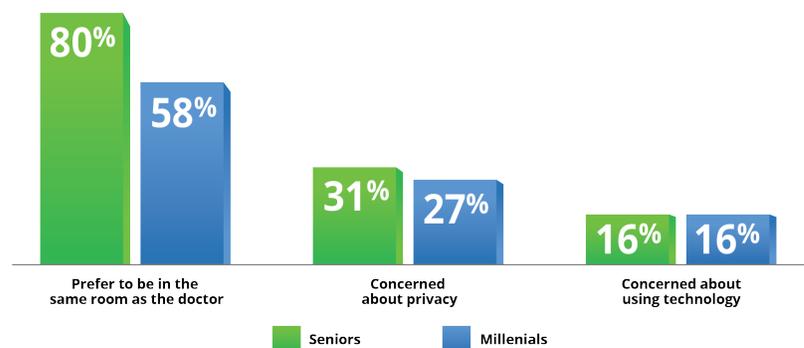
60%

Barriers to adoption remain

Reimbursement: While 52% of seniors are willing to use telehealth, almost none have. A major barrier to adoption for those willing to use telehealth has been reimbursement. Up until now, there has been limited Medicare reimbursement for telehealth, which meant patients were left to incur the entire cost of the visit. With the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services' (CMS) new rules for Medicare telehealth reimbursement, more than 40% of Medicare beneficiaries could be covered for telehealth.⁶ With this tide change, we expect adoption to increase among the senior population.

Prefer in-person care, concerned about privacy: For the 48% of seniors who are not willing to use telehealth, the reason is simple: they prefer in-person care. Of those who are unwilling to use telehealth, 80% said they prefer to be in the same room as the doctor, compared to just 58% of millennials. This was far and away the biggest barrier to senior telehealth adoption. A distant second barrier was concern about privacy (31%). Interestingly, only 16% of seniors were concerned about technology—the same percentage as millennials—which suggests seniors are becoming as tech-savvy as the younger generations.

Why would you not be willing to have an online video visit with a doctor?



A closer look at senior healthcare trends

To better understand how telehealth can help seniors, it's important to first identify how they are currently receiving healthcare and what is most important to them as patients. Here's a brief breakdown of senior healthcare trends:

Senior Healthcare Profile



65+

Increasingly Comfortable with Tech

25%

Currently using a mobile health app

Loyal to PCPs

88%

Unwilling to switch PCPs to one who offers telehealth

High ER Utilizers

62%

would go to the ER for urgent care

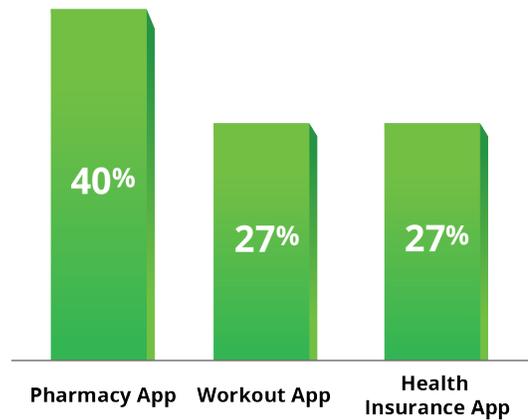
May Be at Risk

55%

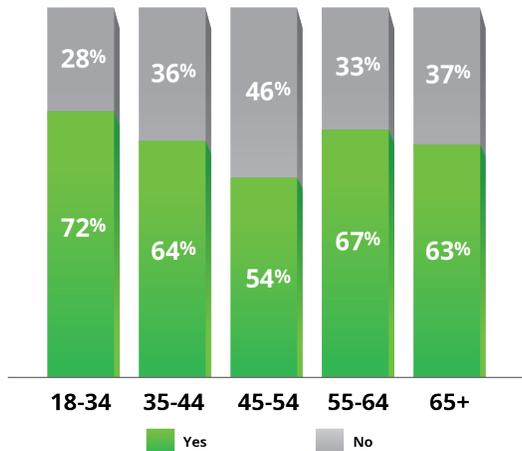
Delay seeing a provider for a health issue

They are comfortable with technology: There is a perception that seniors are not very tech savvy and therefore are not willing to use technology for healthcare. Nearly half of adults aged 65+, however, own a smartphone.⁷ What's more, 25% of seniors are currently using a mobile phone health app, and of those, 27% are using their health plan's mobile app. As a demographic that is loyal to their healthcare providers and payers, this is an important insight. It suggests not only that they are comfortable using technology, but that if telehealth were integrated into their health plan's application, they would potentially use it to receive care.

Health app utilization among seniors



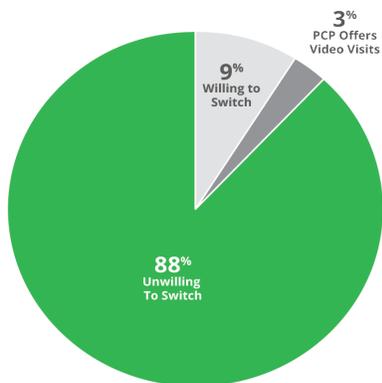
Have you used a personal health monitoring device?



They use personal health monitoring devices.

Interestingly, two-thirds of seniors have also used a personal health monitoring device. In fact, seniors were almost as likely as any other demographic to have used a wearable device. Of those who have used a personal health monitoring device, 84% have used a blood pressure monitor, more than any other demographic. This demonstrates that seniors are already comfortable with the types of technology associated with remote patient monitoring—technology which can be integrated with telehealth to facilitate remote chronic care management.

Would you switch your current PCP if another PCP in your area offered telemedicine visits?

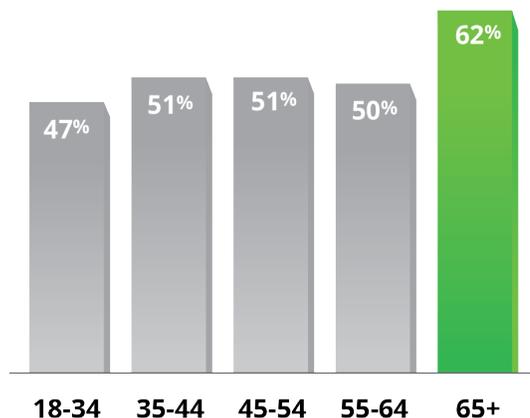


They are loyal to their providers: Seniors are health-care traditionalists, and are very loyal to their primary care providers (PCPs). While most seniors are willing to connect virtually with their PCPs, 88% said their doctors do not offer video visits and they are not willing to switch to a PCP who does. Only 9% of seniors are willing to switch providers to one that offers telehealth—compared to 41% of 18 to 34 year-olds—and 3% said their PCP office already offers video visits. 22% of physicians say they offer video visits,⁸ which suggests many seniors may be unaware their providers offer telehealth.

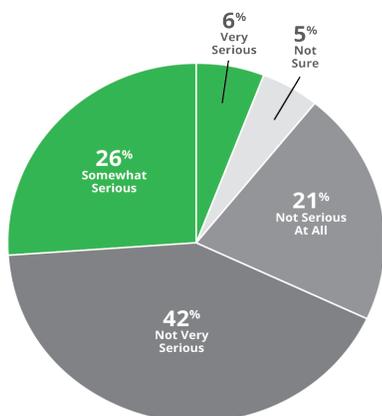
Most likely to use the ER for urgent care: Nearly two-thirds of seniors said they would go to the emergency room in the middle of the night for an urgent care issue, significantly higher than any other demographic. This increased willingness to use the ER for urgent care suggests there is an opportunity to educate and direct seniors to more appropriate care settings, including telehealth.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) recently introduced its Emergency Triage, Treat and Transport (ET3) payment model, which will allow ambulances to take seniors to the urgent care center, doctor’s office, or treat them via telehealth instead of sending them to the emergency room. While only in its pilot stage, if adopted nationally this model could save Medicare more than \$500 million a year.⁹

Would go to **ER/Call Ambulance** for a high fever in the middle of the night



How serious was the health problem?



Seniors delay care, even for serious issues: More than half of seniors (55%) have postponed seeing a provider for a health issue. The top three reasons seniors delay seeking care include:

1. Thought the problem would go away (57%)
2. It takes too long to see a provider (40%)
3. High cost (17%)

Seniors are not just postponing care for minor issues; 32% report having delayed care for a somewhat serious or very serious health issue. Seniors that let serious health conditions go untreated will likely eventually end up in the ER or be admitted to a hospital for longer-term care. Telehealth can be used to provider faster, effective and affordable care to this population, which addresses two of their three top reasons for delaying care in the first place.

Strategies to drive telehealth adoption among seniors

Health plans should no longer just assume that their Medicare Advantage members will not use telehealth, and should actively engage the population and design telehealth programs to address their wants and needs. This survey has provided invaluable insights into senior healthcare and telehealth trends and behaviors, and Medicare Advantage (MA) plans can come away with clear steps to help promote telehealth adoption among their members.

Work with network providers. Seniors are traditionalists and are loyal to their PCPs, which means many will only use telehealth if their physicians offer it. MA plans should engage local network providers in their telehealth program, which would allow seniors to see the providers they're loyal to via video. American Well's technology allows health plans to staff their telehealth programs with affiliated providers, as well as use its medical group for wraparound coverage.

Increase education & visibility. If an MA plan is already partnering with local providers on telehealth, chances are seniors are not aware that their providers are available via video. Educating this population on the benefits of telehealth—and informing them if they can see their own provider via telehealth—will drive better utilization among seniors. It can also help decrease the high emergency room utilization among this population.

Focus on the clinical services seniors care about. Seniors know what they want from telehealth, which makes telehealth program prioritization easy. Focus on telehealth programs for prescription renewals, chronic diseases management, and follow-up visits—and staff these programs with network providers. When promoting the program, emphasis on faster, more convenient healthcare will resonate with the 65+ population.

Make co-pays lower than in-person care. Adults over the age of 65 are cost-sensitive; more than half of those willing to use telehealth cited cost savings as their reason. By setting co-pays for virtual visits below the cost of in-person co-pays, this older population will have more of an incentive to use telehealth.

Integrate telehealth into the healthcare experience. Seniors are comfortable with technology, and of those who are using a mobile health app, 27% are using their health plan's app. By integrating telehealth into that health plan app via [American Well's software development kit](#), seniors have more exposure to the benefit and are therefore more likely to use it.

Integrate with remote patient monitoring programs. Most seniors are already utilizing a monitoring device to track their health. Integrating those metrics within a telehealth program can provide seniors with more complete, effective care—especially for chronic conditions.

Conclusion

The changes to CMS' Medicare telehealth reimbursement policy have provided a catalyst that is enabling Medicare Advantage plans to better engage their beneficiaries. The changes have addressed a major barrier to senior telehealth adoption, and are opening the door to new possibilities. MA plans should evolve their telehealth strategies to meet the unique needs of the senior population, and should start thinking differently about the ways they deliver quality healthcare.

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