

Consumers Ages 35-44 Could be the Key to Multi-Generational Telehealth Adoption

Consumers ages 35-44—also known as Generation X—are oftentimes the primary healthcare decision maker in their household—whether that be for themselves, their children or their aging parents. Engaging this group—72% of whom say they are willing to use a video visit—in telehealth could be the key to driving multi-generational usage of telehealth.



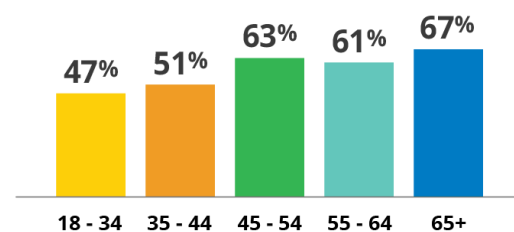
Amwell recently commissioned Harris Poll to conduct an online study among more than 2,000 adults to measure usage and sentiments toward telehealth. The full results of the survey are discussed in [the Telehealth Index: 2019 Consumer Survey](#). Here, we focus on those ages 35-44, examining where the best opportunities for telehealth are among this age group.

Understanding Generation X and telehealth

1: A generation of decision-makers. This age group is increasingly the primary health decision makers not only for their children, but also for their aging parents.¹ As a result, they crave convenient options for care that allow them to meet their own care needs while caring for others. Of those who are willing to use telehealth, 57% would use telehealth to save time, 58% would use it for faster service, and 58% for cost savings. Focusing on these three telehealth value drivers could increase telehealth engagement among this age group, their children and their parents.

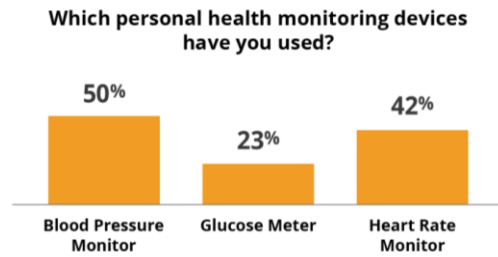
2: A rise in chronic diseases. Generation Xers are seeing increased rate of chronic diseases in recent years. Rates of obesity and diabetes are higher for this generation compared to those of Baby Boomers at the same age². The rate of chronic conditions among those ages 34-36—such as Type 2 diabetes, hypertension, and Crohn’s disease—is higher than that of older Generation Xers at the same age³. Interestingly, more than half of those aged 35-44 are willing to use telehealth to care for these chronic conditions. By offering this population chronic care management programs via telehealth, healthcare organizations can help consumers better manage ongoing conditions.

Willingness to use telehealth for chronic disease management



3: Engaged with health apps and remote patient monitoring.

This age demographic utilizes health apps and remote patient monitoring devices. Of those who have used a health app, 30% say they have used their health insurance plan app—second only to those ages 55-64. This usage of health plan apps present insurance companies with a unique opportunity to integrate telehealth directly into these apps to drive usage. What’s more, 50% of Generation X consumers use a blood pressure monitor, 23% use a glucose monitor, and 42% use a heart rate monitor. Wearable devices can aid healthcare organizations in the ongoing monitoring of chronic diseases, and when coupled with telehealth programs can create a convenient, cost-effective care option.

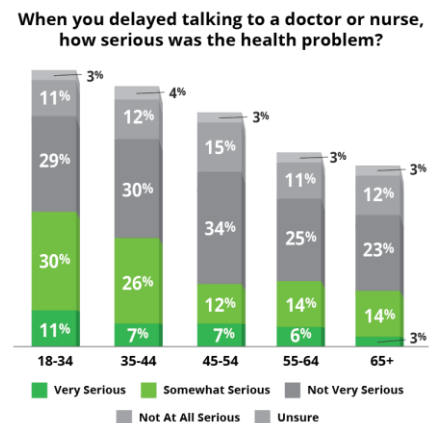


4: Insurance uncertainty needs to be addressed. The two greatest barriers to telehealth adoption among all consumers unwilling to have a video visit include a preference for in-person care and concerns about privacy. Surprisingly, consumers ages 35-44 were also concerned about insurance coverage—more than any other age group. Healthcare organizations, specifically health plans, should clearly communicate insurance coverage for telehealth to this age group. If consumers know that telehealth is covered by insurance, they may be less hesitant to use it.



5: A generation loyal to their providers. Of those ages 35-44, 59% said they are unwilling to switch PCPs to one who offers telehealth—an increase from 2017. Since many of these consumers won’t use telehealth unless their physician offers it, healthcare organizations should work with physicians to implement telehealth for existing patients.

6: Will delay care—even for serious health issues. An overwhelming majority of those ages 35-44 (79%) have delayed care, and 33% have done so for serious or very serious health issues. Most thought their health problem would go away (41%), while others felt it would take too long to be seen by a physician (28%). By marketing telehealth as a faster, more convenient care alternative—and using patients’ own providers—this age group will be more likely to get needed care sooner.



Sources:

1. O'Connor Vos, L., "Look to Generation X to See the Future of Health Care," STAT, April 3, 2017.
2. Pilkington, R., et al., "Are Baby Boomers Healthier than Generation X? A Profile of Australia's Working Generations Using National Health Survey Data," NCBI, March 26, 2014.
3. The Health of Millennials, Blue Cross Blue Shield, April 24, 2019.