



TELEHEALTH DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC: Kaiser Permanente's Experience

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic forced many people to stay at home to reduce potential transmission. In health systems that had already deeply invested in building and using telehealth capacities, including Kaiser Permanente, telehealth use increased. Other physicians and health systems were forced to rapidly develop and scale telehealth offerings.

Kaiser Permanente's telehealth capabilities have long enabled members to connect with their care teams from virtually anywhere, in multiple ways, and we regularly expand the telehealth program and add new capabilities. Members can connect with their care team through secure email exchanges or phone or video visits, for example. In some cases, members access health advice and support through an e-visit option, seeking answers to questions about common conditions through tailored resources, or a chat feature. Patients and their clinicians can remotely monitor health problems, increasing safety, convenience, and savings by avoiding unnecessary in-person visits, travel, parking, and time away from work. To ensure high-quality, well-coordinated patient care, telehealth also supports virtual consultation between practitioners to bring additional expertise and support to our patients.

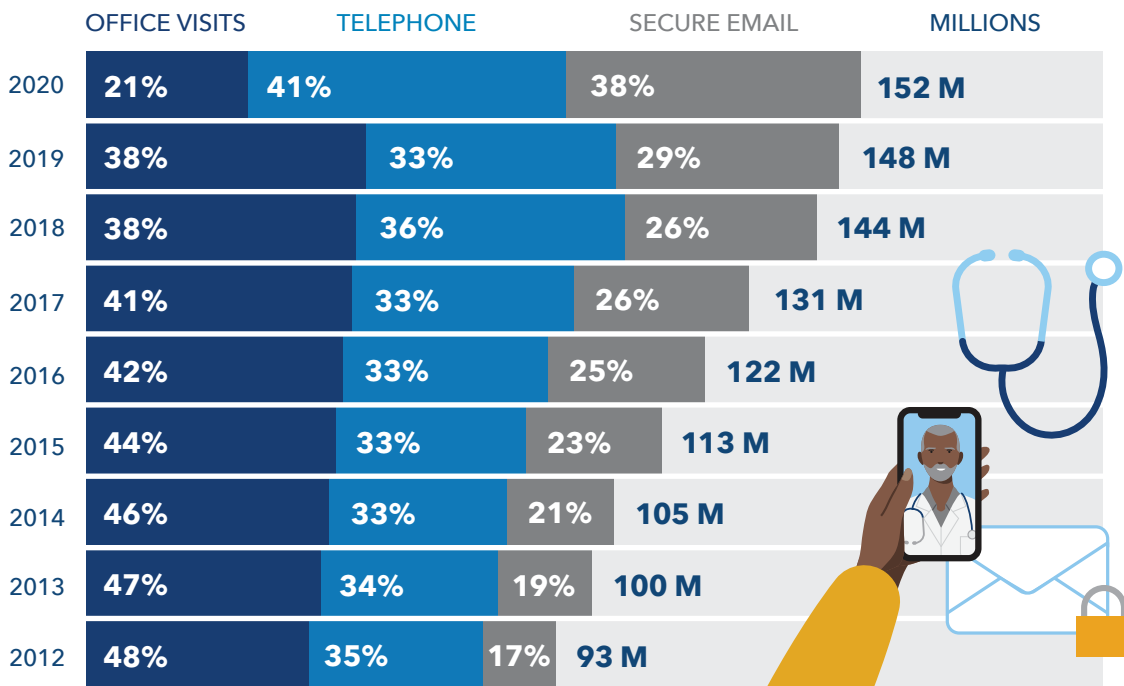
All patient care interactions, including telehealth services, are integrated with Kaiser Permanente's electronic health record to create a better patient experience and help ensure greater quality and safety during and after the visit.

LONG-STANDING COMMITMENT TO TELEHEALTH

Email, Phone, and Office Visits

Kaiser Permanente has invested in telehealth for decades, resulting in a steady increase in the use of telehealth to conveniently access care. With a strong telehealth infrastructure already in place, Kaiser Permanente was able to rapidly scale those services to meet rising demand during the COVID-19 pandemic.

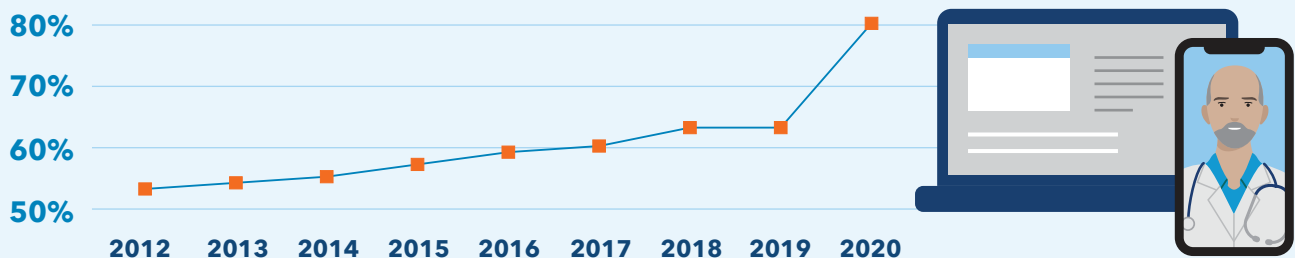
OUTPATIENT TOUCHES



Email/Phone Visits Over Time

Use of secure email and phone visits has been increasing - particularly during the pandemic.

COMBINED EMAIL AND PHONE AS A PERCENT OF TOTAL OUTPATIENT TOUCHES

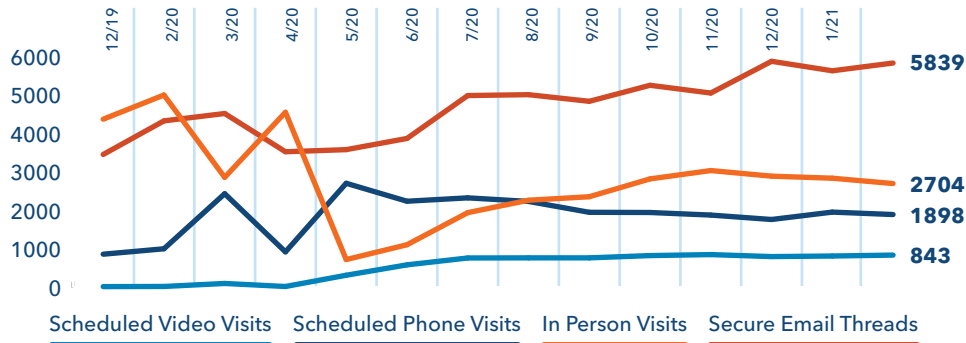


CHANGES DURING 2020

Telehealth During the Pandemic: Email, Phone, Video, and Office Visits

Secure email exchanges, along with scheduled phone and video visits, increased quickly in the spring, as pandemic-related closures happened across the country. In early 2021, all have remained higher than before the pandemic.

UTILIZATION PER 1K MEMBERS, ANNUALIZED



28x
MORE VIDEO

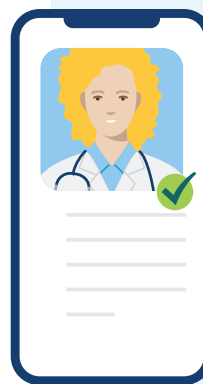
Kaiser Permanente conducted 28 times more video visits in 2020 compared to 2019.

Video Visits

Video visits have been available for several years and use has been steadily increasing. The COVID-19 pandemic triggered a dramatic increase in video visits as members sought convenient, coordinated care that met their needs while staying safe at home. Strong interest in video visits has continued, even as COVID-19 rates have dropped and interest in in-person care has increased.

Virtual Consultations

Throughout 2020, Kaiser Permanente continued to use telehealth to improve care in our hospitals and emergency rooms, providing bedside teleconsultations to offer additional clinical expertise and support. The Kaiser Permanente telestroke program, for example, provides faster access to drugs that dissolve clots and restore blood flow to the brain, resulting in better patient outcomes. In this program, telehealth is used to quickly connect paramedics, pharmacy staff, a specially trained stroke neurologist, a radiologist, and other stroke alert team members.



2x

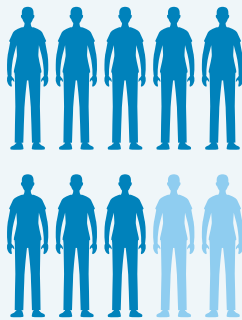
NATIONAL AVERAGE

Kaiser Permanente patients receive clot-busting medication to treat strokes more than twice as fast as the national average

SATISFACTION WITH TELEHEALTH

Satisfaction with Telehealth

The vast majority of members (80%) who used telehealth during the COVID-19 pandemic were satisfied with those services.



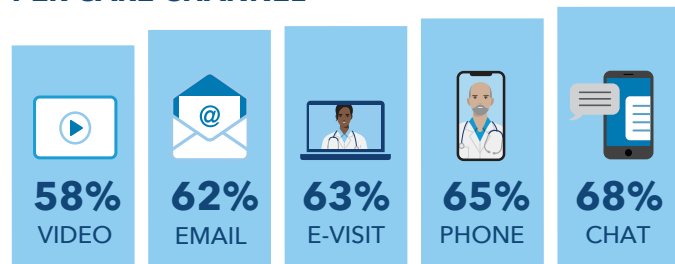
8 OUT OF 10

Number of members who say they will likely continue using telehealth, after a single visit during the pandemic.

Resolution Through Telehealth

Most Kaiser Permanente members who used telehealth services during the COVID-19 pandemic said it solved their health concerns. As an integrated care provider, Kaiser Permanente was able to see members in person if additional support was needed.

PERCENT OF ISSUES SOLVED PER CARE CHANNEL



ACCESS

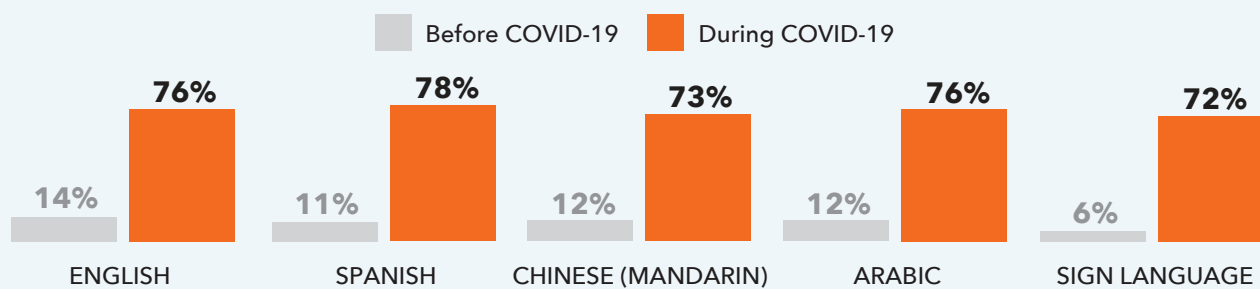


Kaiser Permanente is working to ensure easy digital access for all our members, so that everyone can benefit from telehealth services.

Languages

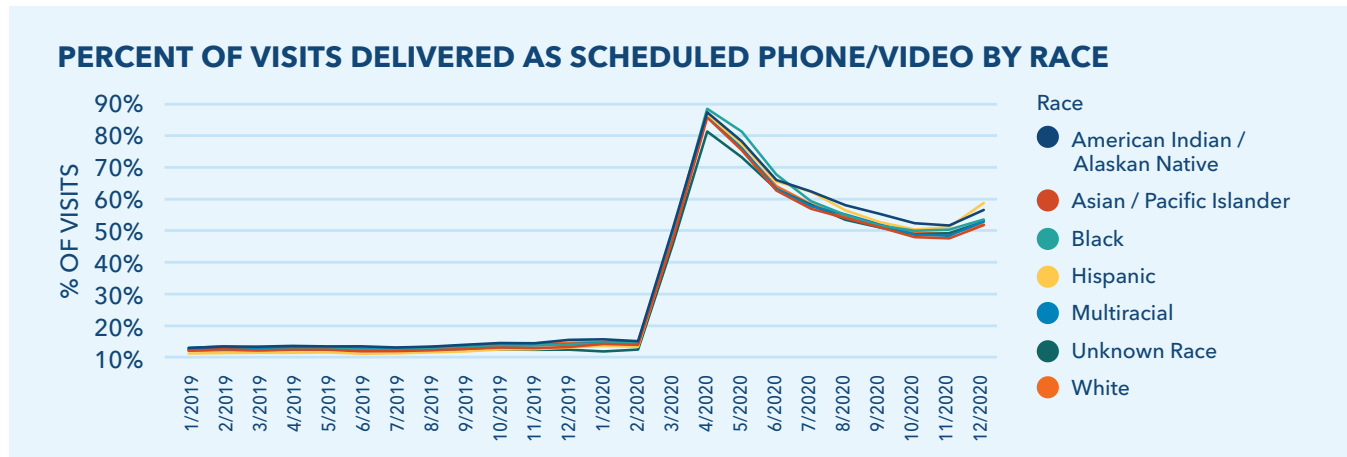
Kaiser Permanente provides care through telehealth services in over 150 languages, including sign language. During the pandemic, telehealth use increased dramatically in every language demographic studied.

PERCENT OF TELEHEALTH VISITS FOR MEMBERS WITH DIFFERENT PREFERRED LANGUAGES



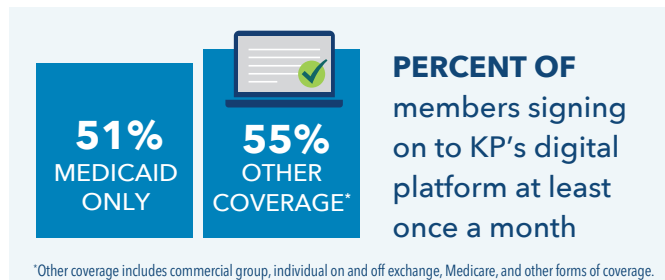
Phone and Video Visits by Race

During the pandemic, the proportion of visits delivered by phone or video increased to a similar degree across all racial groups.



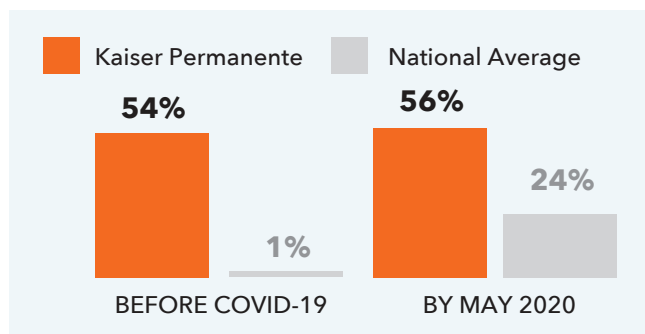
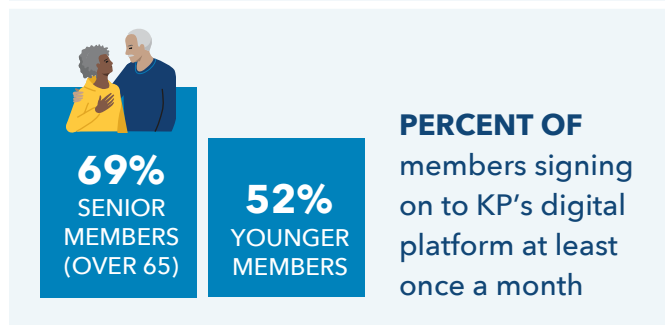
Members with Medicaid Coverage

Medicaid-only members are less likely to regularly sign on to Kaiser Permanente’s digital platform, where they can access many telehealth services, compared to other members, but over half sign on once a month or more.



Seniors

Senior Kaiser Permanente members are more likely than younger members to regularly sign on to Kaiser Permanente’s digital platform, where they can access many telehealth services, compared to other members. This is likely related to greater need for health services as people age.



Before the pandemic, senior Kaiser Permanente members were much more likely than seniors overall to use telehealth services. Seniors across the country increased their telehealth use during the pandemic, but Kaiser Permanente seniors were still more than twice as likely to use telehealth.

To learn about telehealth policy discussions, go to <https://www.kpihp.org/category/issue-areas/telehealth/>.