



**Louisiana Managed**  
Medicaid Association

# The State of Telehealth Adoption in Medicaid

A survey of providers about  
the trends, issues and future  
of telehealth

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## Introduction

As the COVID-19 public health emergency has continued, Medicaid health care providers and patients have adapted to the new realities with ingenuity and determination.

When we reached more than half a year in the pandemic and substantial vaccine progress became apparent, we began to consider the state of telehealth adoption and its prospects once the public health emergency ends.

As a coalition of the state's five Medicaid health plans, the Louisiana Managed Medicaid Association conducted this survey of providers to add to the public knowledge about telehealth adoption and its impact on practices and patient care, common issues experienced, and how providers see telehealth's future.

We intend that this research will help Louisiana's health care regulators, providers and health plans shape a safe and appropriate role for telehealth in an expanded array of options for Medicaid members to access care, long into the future.

## Executive Summary

- There is widespread adoption of telehealth among Medicaid providers, with participation nearly doubling since the spring. Eighty percent of respondents report using telehealth in their practice.
- The overwhelming majority of providers (86%) report being satisfied with the use of telehealth in their practice.
- The most common issues reported during telehealth visits are connection instability (54.6%) and patient facility with their smartphone or the app (46.8%). 18.6% of responses indicated that patient interest/willingness is a common issue.
- A large share of providers primarily use native phone capabilities (audio only or native video call function) for their telehealth visits. This has significant implications for the future of telehealth after the public health emergency ends, as these may not normally be considered HIPAA secure or acceptable as a telehealth visit.
- 67% of providers expect telehealth to become a normal, permanent part of their practice. Notably, 54% indicated they strongly agree with this statement.

# Survey Results

## Telehealth Adoption Trends

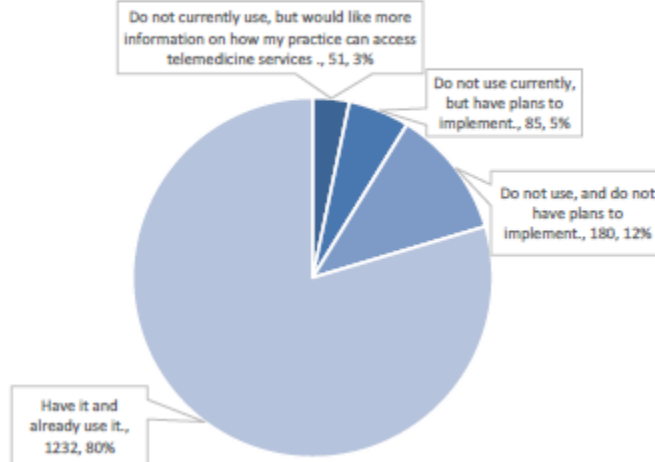
There is widespread adoption of telehealth among Medicaid providers, with participation nearly doubling since April.

In our March 2020 survey, 44% of providers reported already using telehealth. By November, that number nearly doubled, to 80% of providers using telehealth. Another 5% reported having plans to implement telehealth in the fall survey.

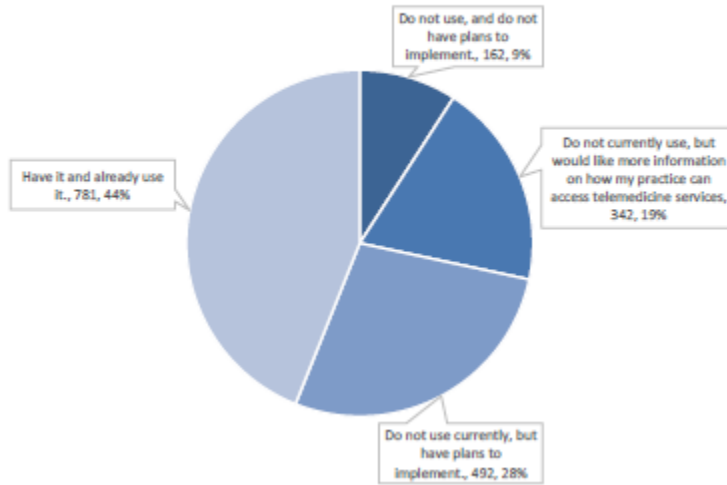
The number of providers not active on telehealth but wanting more information dropped from 19% to only 3%. And the number of providers who do not intend to implement telehealth grew slightly, from 9% to 12%.

**1a) Telehealth, at this time, consists of simultaneous audio/visual telemedicine with a HIPAA-secure platform. Please indicate your current telehealth capacity.**

(1,548 of 1,548 responses included)



**1b) Comparative responses for same question from LMMA’s original March 2020 telehealth survey (1,777 of 1,777 responses included)**



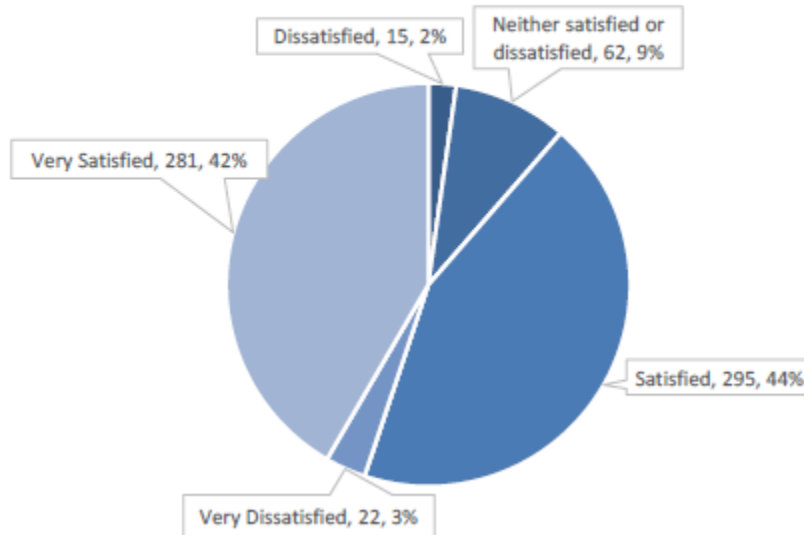
**1c) Tabular comparison of the responses to question #1 from the original and follow-up surveys**

Response Option	Distribution of Responses		Change in Distribution of Responses
	Original Survey	Follow-up Survey	
Do not currently use, but would like more information on how my practice can access telemedicine services.	19.2%	3.3%	-16.0%
Do not use currently, but have plans to implement.	27.7%	5.5%	-22.2%
Have it and already use it.	44.0%	79.6%	35.6%
Do not use, and do not have plans to implement.	9.1%	11.6%	2.5%

## Telehealth Satisfaction

The overwhelming majority of providers report being satisfied with telehealth in their practice, with 42% being “very satisfied” and 44% “satisfied.”

**2a) If you have utilized telehealth services, how would you rate your satisfaction with telehealth in your practice?**  
(675 of 1,548 responses included)



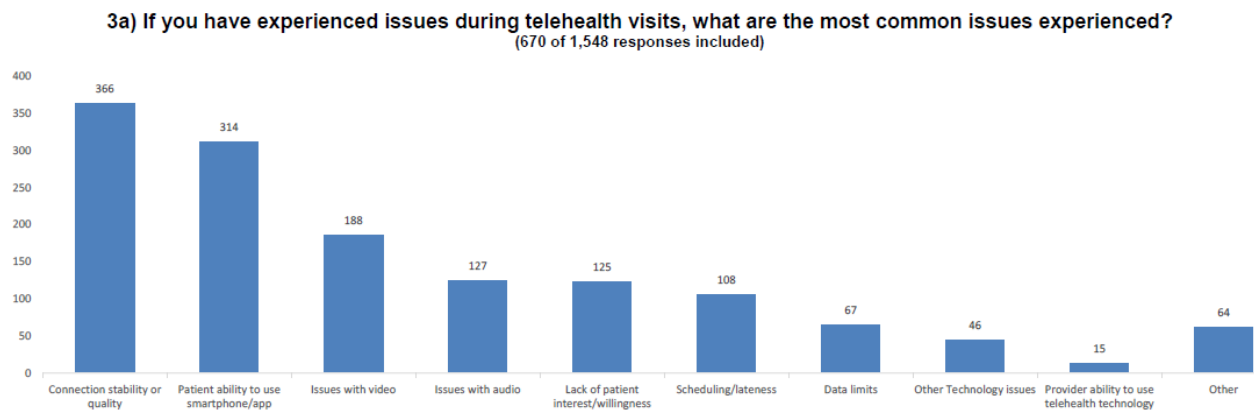
## Common Issues Experienced

The most common issues reported during telehealth visits are connection instability (54.6%) and patient facility with their smartphone or the app (46.8%).

18.6% of responses indicated that patient interest/willingness is a common issue.

Only 15 responses out of 670 (2.2%) reported provider ability to use the technology to be an issue, suggesting most providers have acquired the skills needed to effectively use telehealth.

Note that respondents were able to select multiple responses to this question.

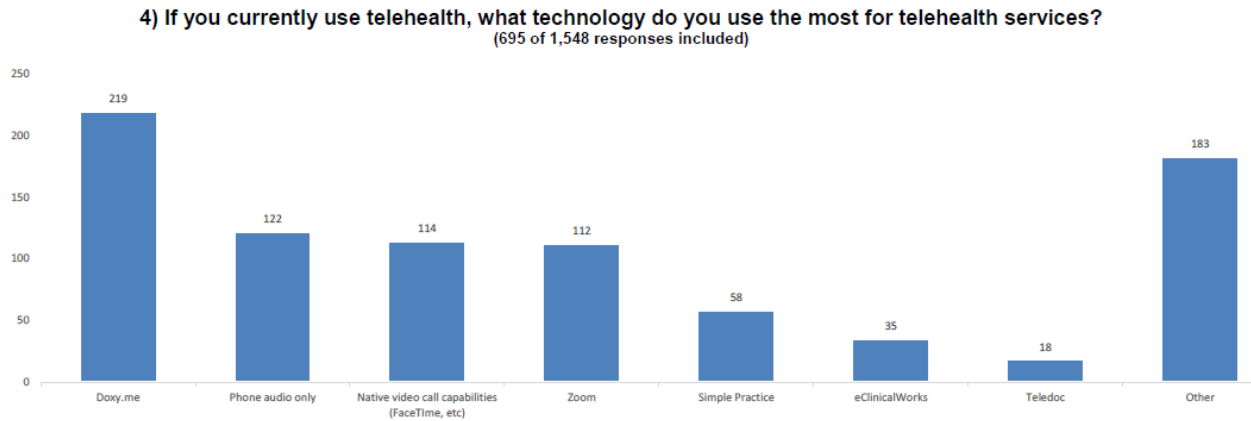




## Technology Platform

A large share of providers primarily use native phone capabilities (audio only or native video call function) for their telehealth visits. This has significant implications for the future of telehealth after the COVID-19 public health emergency ends, as these may not normally be considered HIPAA secure or acceptable as a telehealth visit.

The next most common platform was Doxy.me, followed by Zoom, Simple Practice, eClinicalWorks and Teladoc. Overall, 63.5% of responses indicated using one of these telehealth technology platforms.

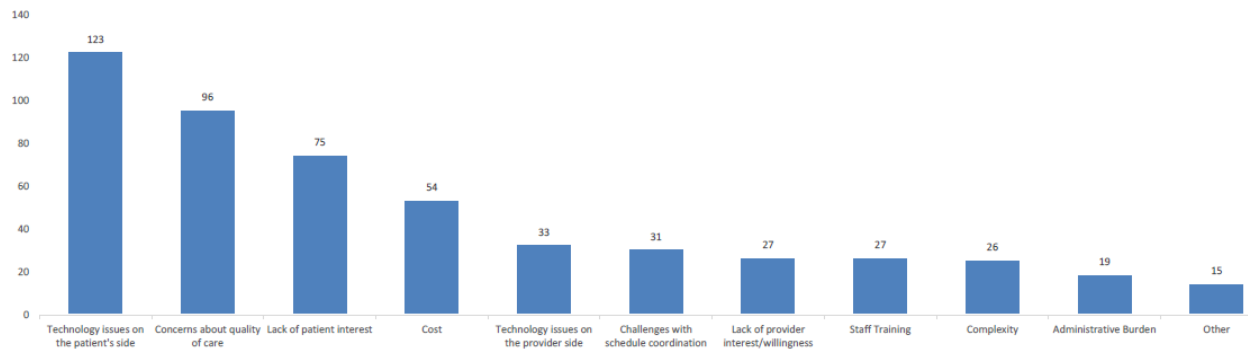


## Barriers to Telehealth Adoption

When providers decide not to use telehealth, patient technology issues are the most common reasons cited. A high number of responses also cite concerns about the quality of care provided via telehealth. Lack of patient interest also appears to be a considerable issue in these cases.

Operational concerns, like provider-side technology, scheduling, administrative burden, etc. appear at low, but consistent rates (about 20% of the volume of patient-side technology issues).

**6) If you have not utilized telehealth, what barriers, if any, have influenced your decision not to use it?**  
(244 of 1,548 responses included)



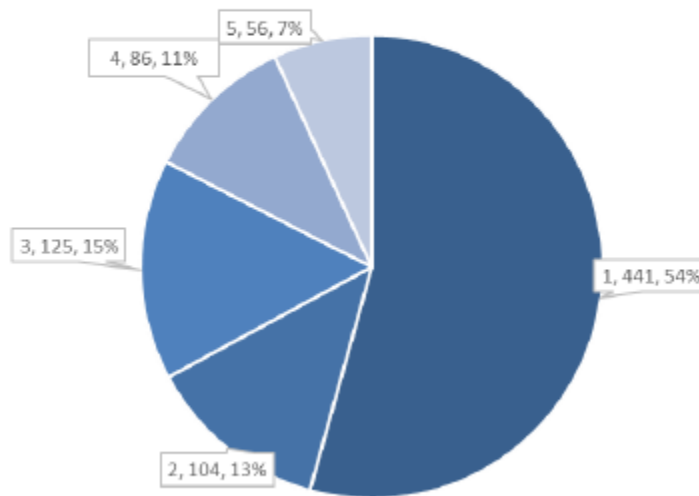
## The Future of Telehealth

Lastly, we asked providers whether they expect telehealth to become a normal, permanent part of their practice or if they see it as a temporary solution during the pandemic.

67% of providers expect telehealth to become a normal, permanent part of their practice. Notably, 54% indicated they strongly agree with this statement.

18% of providers see telehealth a temporary solution to the current crisis, with another 15% responding neutrally.

**7) On a five-point scale, which of the statements better reflects your opinion on the future of telehealth? One being “Telehealth will become a normal permanent part of our practice”, and five being “Telehealth is a temporary solution to the current crisis, and will not permanently change our practice”.<sup>7</sup>**  
(812 of 1,548 responses included)



## Methodology

Wakely Consulting Group, LLC (Wakely) was retained by the Louisiana Managed Medicaid Association (LMMA) to conduct a telehealth follow-up provider survey.

The LMMA telehealth follow-up provider survey was conducted to review Healthy Louisiana providers' current telehealth capabilities and challenges, and to compare their current capabilities to those reported in LMMA's March 2020 telehealth survey.<sup>1, 2</sup> An email invitation to the survey was circulated to 10,716 providers within the Healthy Louisiana MCOs' networks on October 21, 2020.<sup>3</sup> The survey received 1,548 responses and was closed on December 3, 2020.

In general, provider responses indicated a significant increase in the use of telemedicine between the two survey periods (see Appendix A, Question 1 for additional details).

For questions 1-2, 5, and 7 the respondent was only allowed to select one answer from a pre-populated set of options. The responses to these questions are summarized using pie charts to indicate the prevalence of each response.

For questions 3-4 and 6 the respondent was allowed to select multiple answers from a pre-populated set of options. For these questions we summarized the results using a bar chart to show the number of responses for each option. Note that for these questions the sum of responses assigned to the various options will exceed the total number of responses included in the summary since some respondents selected more than one option.

Questions 4 and 6 also included an "Other" option, which allowed the respondent to further specify their response through a free-response field. The answers to these questions indicated a significant portion of "Other" responses. As a result, we reviewed the associated "Other" free-responses and re-categorized them using judgment. The summary of responses to questions 4 and 6 include additional uncertainty due to the judgment relied upon to categorize the "Other" responses.

### Caveats & Limitations

Wakely provided the background and summarized provider responses to LMMA's telehealth follow-up provider survey. Wakely downloaded, formatted, and summarized the responses received, but did not perform any actuarial analysis on the responses, and did not make any

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<sup>1</sup> The LMMA telehealth follow-up provider survey can be viewed here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/6L293W3>

<sup>2</sup> Wakely compared the responses to question 1 of the telehealth follow-up provider survey to the 1,777 responses received for the same question from LMMA's original March 2020 telehealth survey. Note that responses to LMMA's original March 2020 telehealth survey were received through April 15th.

<sup>3</sup> Each MCO provided Wakely with a list of email addresses for providers in their network. Wakely identified 10,716 unique emails addresses across the lists provided by the MCOs.

attempt to validate the information provided in the responses. In summarizing the responses to questions 4 and 6, we relied on judgment to categorize various “Other” responses.

Wakely provides actuarial services to a variety of clients throughout the health industry. Our clients include commercial, Medicare, and Medicaid health plans, the federal and state governments, medical providers, and other entities that operate in the domestic and international health insurance markets. Wakely has implemented various internal practices to reduce or eliminate conflict of interest risk in serving our various clients. Except as noted here, the responsible actuaries are financially independent and free from conflict concerning all matters related to performing the actuarial services underlying this analysis. In addition, Wakely is organizationally and financially independent from LMMA.

## About the Louisiana Managed Medicaid Association

Over 1.6 million Louisiana residents receive health care coverage through the Medicaid health plans of the Louisiana Managed Medicaid Association. We collaborate with government partners, providers, community organizations and our members to improve health, encourage whole-person wellness, and responsibly manage health care costs.

The Medicaid health plans of the Louisiana Managed Medicaid Association are:



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