



Coronavirus Update

Telemedicine During the COVID Pandemic

Telemedicine provides convenience and time savings for patients...

Patients noted several conveniences that influenced their use of telemedicine. By eliminating travel time and the waiting period to be seen, virtual care is estimated to save over 100 minutes per patient. [1]

Reasons for Using Telemedicine	% Survey Responders
Easy-to-use technology	69%
Communication	57%
Online Scheduling Capabilities	47%
Immediate Appointment Availability	47%

...and typically costs less than in-person care

The costs for an in-person visit can be twice as expensive as a telehealth visit. [2] However, to encourage the use of telemedicine as a means to slow the spread of COVID, Medicare increased provider reimbursements for telemedicine to match in-person visits under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES). [3] Commercial payors also increased the reimbursements for healthcare providers to deliver care through telemedicine.



[1] - <https://www.medicaleconomics.com/view/four-new-statistics-that-prove-that-telemedicine-isn-t-just-a-pandemic-fad>

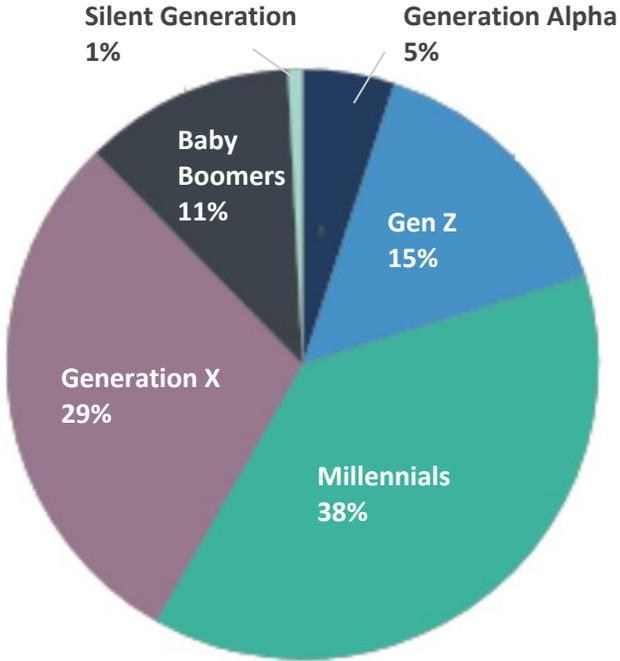
[2] - <https://www.cnn.com/2020/05/06/why-you-should-take-advantage-of-your-telemedicine-options.html>

[3] - <https://www.fastcompany.com/90490988/covid-19-is-normalizing-telehealth-and-thats-a-good-thing>

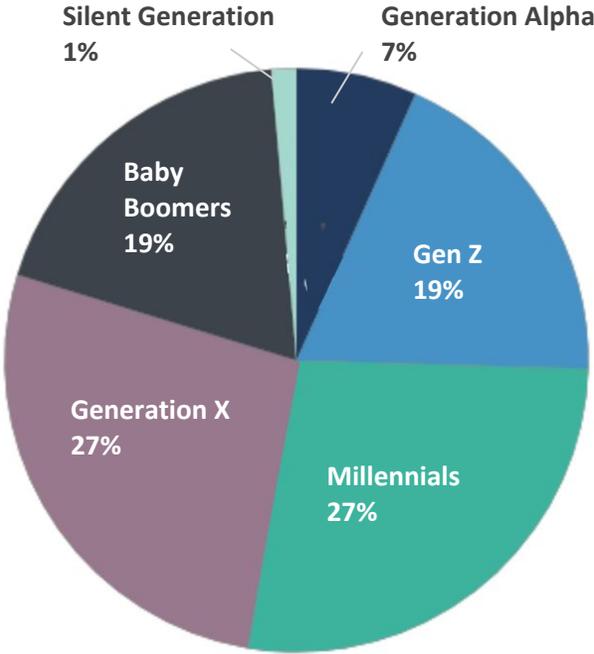
Baby Boomers had the largest year-over-year increase in telemedicine services

Year-to-date Millennials & Gen X'ers utilize telemedicine more than all other generations in total. This may not be a surprise as these age groups have high use of technological innovations. It is of note that several other generations increased telemedicine use compared to this time last year. The largest year over year increase was seen among Baby Boomers.

% of Visits by Generation 2019



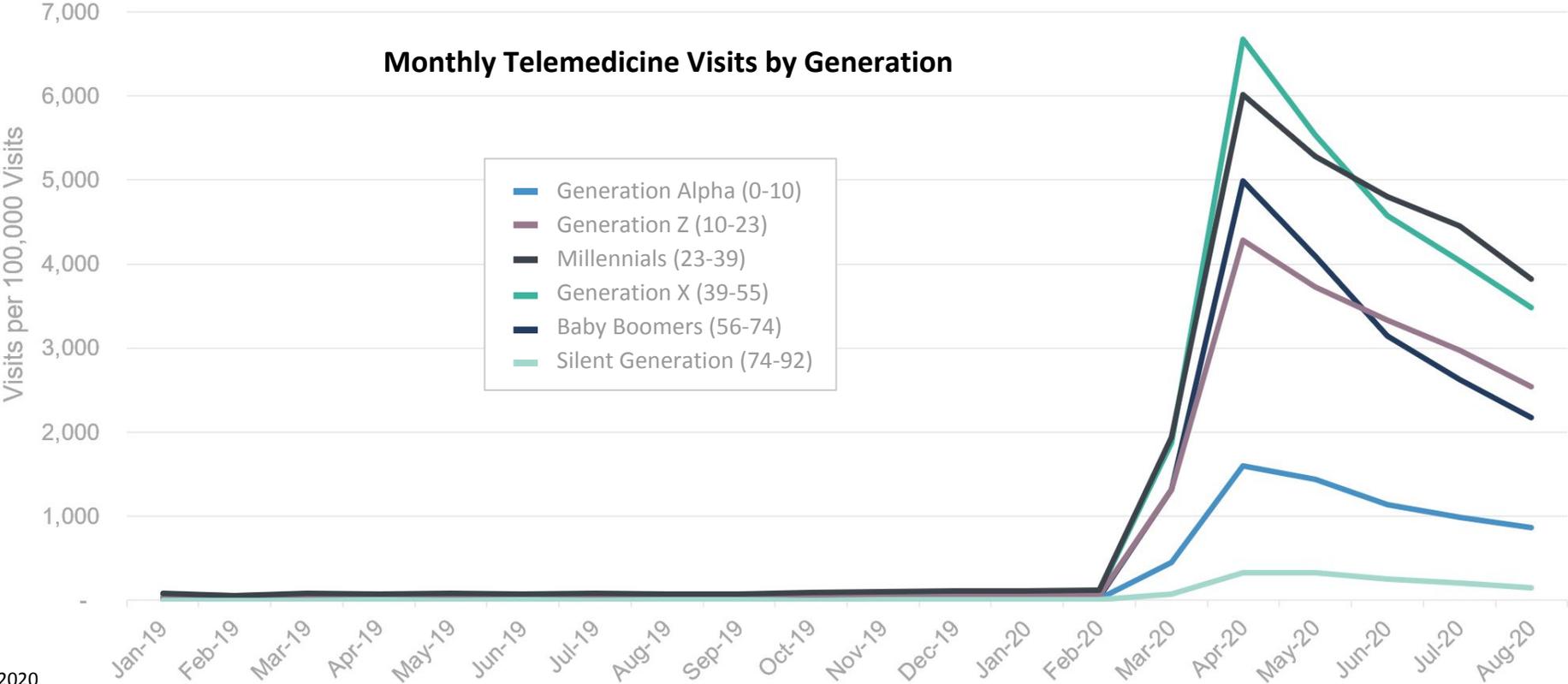
% of Visits by Generation 2020



*Source Innovu Data Jan – Aug 2020

Generation X had the highest use of telemedicine during the first peak of the pandemic

Baby Boomers (ages 56-74 as of this year) and the Silent Generation (ages 74-92) are at the highest risk of severe illness from COVID-19 [4]. Because of this risk, these members are well suited to take advantage of telemedicine. However, telemedicine does require a level of comfortability with technology that some experts feared would make it inaccessible to members of these older generations.[5] According to Innovu's data, the use of telemedicine was highest in Generation X followed by Millennials and then Baby Boomers.



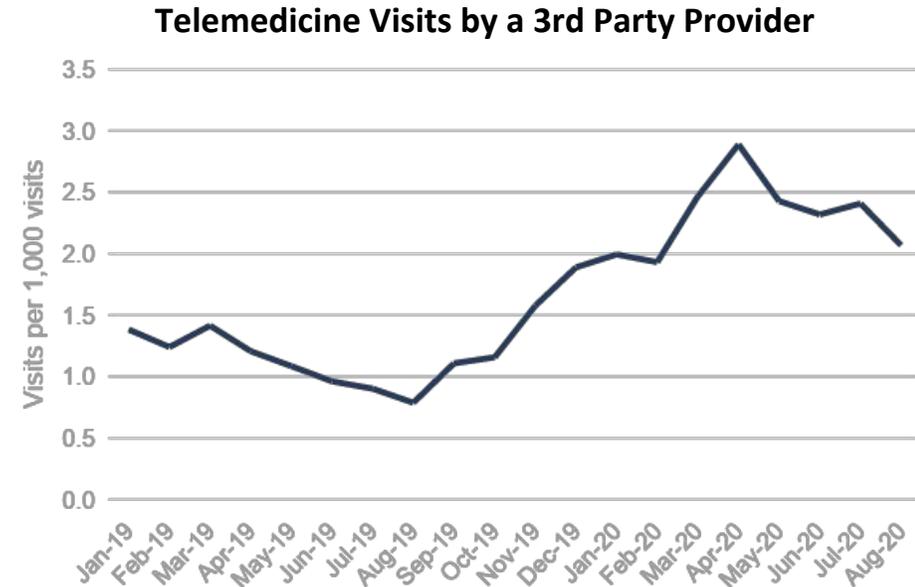
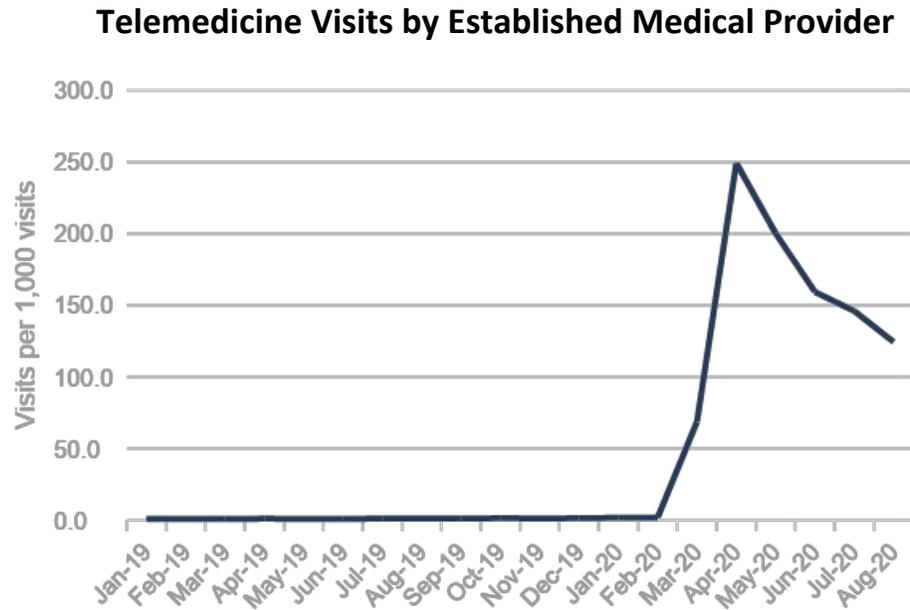
*Source Innovu Data Jan – Aug 2020

[4] - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/older-adults.html>

[5] - <https://labblog.uofmhealth.org/rounds/telehealth-visits-skyrocket-for-older-adults-but-concerns-and-barriers-remain>

Telemedicine services have steadily declined since April 2020

Telemedicine visits performed by the patient's Established Medical Provider and a 3rd Party Provider (such as Teladoc®) peaked in April. Since then there has been a steep decline in telehealth utilization, with services provided by Established Medical Providers falling at a 50% decline compared to 3rd Party Providers falling at 28%. A shift back to in-person visits may be further accelerated in the coming months as insurers start rolling back the higher telemedicine reimbursements in October for what they view as less care for their members. [6].



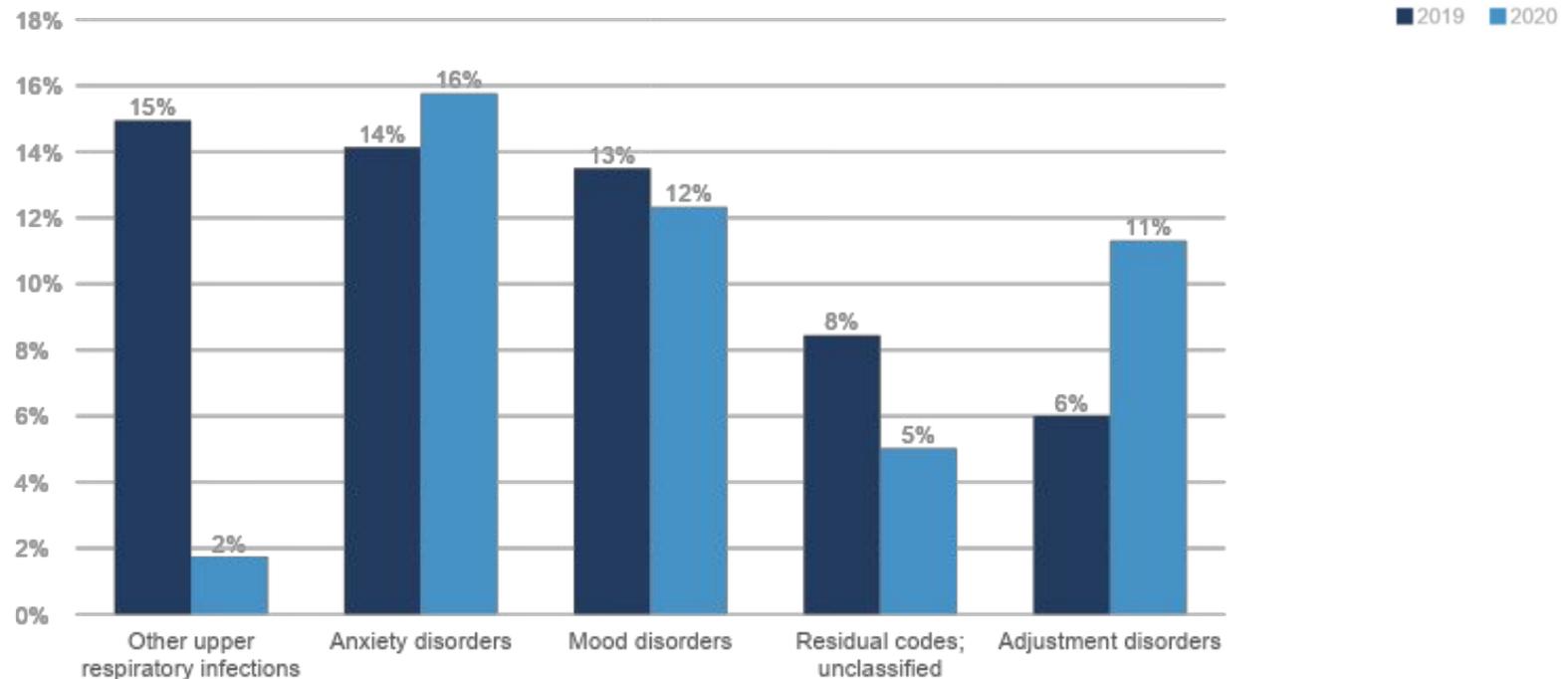
*A 3rd party telemedicine provider is a visit where the doctor is contracted through a company whose main purpose is to provide telemedicine services. An established medical provider visit is where the member sees their typical in-person doctor, only the service is rendered remotely.

[6] <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/health/health-insurers-are-starting-to-roll-back-coverage-for-telehealth-even-though-demand-is-way-up-due-to-covid-19>

Anxiety is the #1 medical condition of those using telemedicine this year

In the October Covid Observations it was noted that the pandemic is taking a mental toll on our communities. Innovu's data shows that anxiety is the most common condition in individuals using telemedicine providers. Numerous studies support the effectiveness of providing mental and behavioral health services by phone or video conference, as these virtual services help provide safe & effective care during the COVID pandemic. [7]

Top 5 Clinical Conditions with Telemedicine Visits



*Source Innovu Data

[7] <https://www.commonwealthfund.org/blog/2020/using-telehealth-meet-mental-health-needs-during-covid-19-crisis>

Summary

- Baby Boomers embraced telemedicine during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Telemedicine visits have begun to decline since peaking in April 2020.
- Employers need to monitor the utilization and costs of these visits as recent changes could lead providers to steer patients back to in-person care.
- Anxiety is the leading condition being treated by telemedicine providers.

