

Survey Finds Majority of Parents Willing to Engage in Telehealth Post-COVID

National data shows telehealth addresses some social determinants of health; Helps with caregiver equity among mothers and fathers

JACKSONVILLE, FL (July 28, 2021) – New data released today from Nemours Children’s Health and national telehealth leader [Amwell](#)® (NYSE: AMWL) finds that a substantial majority of parents (61%) are more willing to use telehealth than before the COVID-19 pandemic; this includes 29% of parents who previously did not use telehealth. This survey was administered to better understand the COVID-19 impact on telehealth one year after the World Health Organization declared a global pandemic. Beyond trends related to higher telehealth volume and acceptance, this national report shows:

- Adverse social determinants of health are widely present
- Telehealth offers a positive influence on balancing parental responsibilities
- Providers can act as enablers to telehealth
- Reimbursement remains a barrier to more widespread telehealth use

The survey included more than 2,000 adults across the U.S. who are parents/guardians of children under 18 years old, including parents experiencing adverse social determinants of health such as housing instability, inadequate health insurance coverage, transportation or other. Survey responses showed families with social determinants challenges were more likely to have used telehealth during the pandemic than parents who did not suffer these circumstances (20% vs 14%). This group of parents also reports they are more likely to engage in ongoing, frequent use of telehealth (37% vs 14%) moving forward.

“While one might expect that factors such as income or access to technology are barriers to telehealth, this survey underscores how telehealth proved to be a viable solution to expanding access and reducing disparities in providing timely care during COVID-19,” said R. Lawrence Moss, MD, President and Chief Executive Officer of Nemours Children’s Health System. “Regulations that were eased during the pandemic need to become permanent to support telehealth access for the long-term. Telehealth can be part of building health equity among people experiencing social, economic, and family challenges.”

Amid the pandemic, when safety risks associated with in-person care were heightened, telehealth usage increased significantly with 77% of parents using telehealth, compared to 43% beforehand; and in pediatric care 79% of families used telehealth compared to 35% pre-pandemic. Beyond increased use, the Nemours Children’s Health and Amwell national survey discovered the following:

Adverse Social Determinants of Health Are Widely Present

Nearly half of all parents surveyed (48%) reported experiencing at least one adverse social determinant of health such as living in an unsafe community or lacking transportation, whereas 28% reported experiencing at least two, and 15% reported experiencing three or more. But even in the face of these hardships, parents are engaging in telehealth services, such as well-child visits (35%), urgent care (34%) and prescription renewals (30%). In a breakdown of the survey sample by parents who had experienced adverse social determinants of health in the previous six months versus those who had not, parents managing these challenges were more likely to use telehealth for their children (20% vs 14%) or for both themselves and their child (28% vs 23%) than were parents who had not faced these difficulties.

Telehealth Offers a Positive Influence on Balancing Parental Responsibilities

Telehealth appears to have an unexpected positive effect on family dynamics: Almost 90% of survey respondents reported that telehealth can help parents be more active and participate together in their child’s care compared with in-person visits. An imbalance between parents in participation in the child’s care was exposed during the pandemic. Almost half (49%) of fathers say telehealth could help them be more involved in medical appointments, which could help shift household division of labor. Communicating with parents about various possible benefits of telehealth may help promote increased usage.

Providers Can Act as Enablers to Telehealth

Information and encouragement from healthcare providers may help increase telehealth access for parents. More than one-quarter (28%) of parents said they do not use telehealth because they have never been offered it and 12% said they had never heard of telehealth.

“Despite the dramatic increase in telehealth usage and awareness, providers still play a critical role in patient education and furthering virtual care adoption. We believe that patients will listen to their doctors and that it’s vital for providers to not only introduce telehealth, but to use it in an ongoing way to provide quality care,” said Dr. Mia Finkelston, Senior Medical Director, Amwell.

Reimbursement Remains a Barrier to Widespread Telehealth Use

Policy makers and payors, with support from the healthcare industry, are instrumental to the uptake of telehealth services—especially among parents with adverse social determinants of health. They can enact policies and regulations that increase

coverage of and reimbursement. For instance, almost two-thirds of parents (64%) said having video visits covered by insurance was “essential” or “extremely important” to their future use of telehealth. Parents who reported adverse social determinants of health were even more likely to say that having telehealth covered by insurance is important.

“Federal waivers and state flexibilities during the pandemic was the linchpin to telehealth access, which helped to avoid negative consequences from delayed preventative, chronic or routine care as well as reduce inequities for those who are medically or socially vulnerable,” said Kara Odom Walker, MD, Executive Vice President and Chief Population Health Officer of Nemours Children’s Health. “As we emerge from the pandemic, these medically vulnerable populations will still exist. We must continue to harness telehealth, when appropriate, as a way to address some of these health disparities.”

A report with the full survey results can be downloaded [here](#).

Survey Method:

About This Study: The Nemours-Amwell Telehealth Survey was conducted online by Dynata on behalf of Nemours and Amwell among 2,056 U.S. adults ages 18+ who are parents/guardians of children under age 18 (surveyed from March 19 to March 31, 2021). This online survey is not based on a probability sample and therefore no estimate of theoretical sampling error can be calculated. For complete research method, including weighting variables and subgroup sample sizes, please contact Christine Vaughan at cvaughan@thereisgroup.com

About Nemours Children’s Health System. Nemours Children’s Health System is one of the nation’s largest multistate pediatric health systems, including two free-standing children’s hospitals and a network of nearly 80 primary and specialty care practices across five states. Nemours seeks to transform the health of children by adopting a holistic health model that utilizes innovative, safe, and high-quality care, while also caring for the health of the whole child beyond medicine. Nemours also powers the world’s most-visited website for information on the health of children and teens, KidsHealth.org.

The Nemours Foundation, established through the legacy and philanthropy of Alfred I. duPont, provides pediatric clinical care, research, education, advocacy, and prevention programs to the children, families and communities it serves.

About Amwell

Amwell is a leading telehealth platform in the United States and globally, connecting and enabling providers, insurers, patients, and innovators to deliver greater access to more affordable, higher quality care. Amwell believes that digital care delivery will transform healthcare. The Company offers a single, comprehensive platform to support all telehealth needs from urgent to acute and post-acute care, as well as chronic care management and healthy living. With over a decade of experience, Amwell powers telehealth solutions for over 2,000 hospitals and 55 health plan partners with over 36,000 employers, covering over 80 million lives. For more information please visit <https://business.amwell.com/>.

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