



Repost our talking points on your social media:



Telemedicine: Why it Matters Right Now

Background

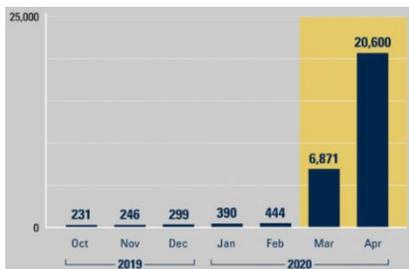
The COVID-19 pandemic is straining Michigan's healthcare system. Suddenly, telemedicine is viewed as a mainstream option in the effort to alleviate overwhelmed hospitals and clinics. MI is confronted with this challenge right now—the delivery of fast, effective virtual medical care across the entire state, without disaffecting patients, healthcare providers, or insurers.

Core Message

The MI Legislature has historically restricted telemedicine practice with a strictly-defined set of health services. Telemedicine's role in healthcare delivery has dramatically expanded during the emergence of COVID-19, as has the need to treat highly contagious persons separately from those with non-coronavirus illnesses—many of whom may have critical conditions themselves.

Key Arguments

1. **Telemedicine has experienced explosive growth in the past four months.** The number of University of Michigan's Michigan Health telemedicine video visits has steadily increased five-fold from 444 in February 2020 to 6,800 in March, to over 20,000 video visits through April 24, 2020, as shown below. These numbers will only continue to rise as the patient population in need of intensive care increases.



2. **Telemedicine saves money.** In just five Michigan counties, telehealth usage saves \$5.7 million each year through productivity gains and through reductions in the frequency of routine visits to healthcare professionals. With a nationwide healthcare system plagued by high health care costs and low medical capacity, telehealth not only delivers better patient outcomes, but does so at a lower cost and more efficiently.

3. **Access to telemedicine is improving.** The MI State House passed a series of telemedicine legislation in May 2020, which would provide reimbursements for store-and-forward telehealth services, remote patient monitoring (RPM) services, and telehealth appointments via live video. Such measures, if signed into law, would streamline the transmission of medical information, reduce the burden on hospitals, and improve access to medical care for those in remote locations.
4. **Reducing the digital divide will increase access to telemedicine.** Currently, 368,000 Michiganders do not have access to broadband at all and 809,000 do not have access to broadband speeds of at least 25 mbps, which further limits access to healthcare via telemedicine.

See complete report: [Telemedicine: To See or Not to See?](#)

TALKING POINTS

- Let's flip the MI House and strengthen telemedicine health care services.
- Telemedicine delivery of healthcare reduces the strain on our hospitals and staff overwhelmed by COVID-19.
- Telemedicine increases primary and specialty healthcare to underserved rural and urban areas (including black census tracts in Detroit), thereby reducing medical deserts.
- Access to healthcare accelerates the dismantling of institutionalized racism.
- A Blue wave will provide an opportunity to reverse the ban placed on telemedicine medical abortion services (prescription medication).