

## Analyzing and Addressing Telemedicine Barriers Among Lubbock Medicaid Patients

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## **Analyzing and Addressing Telemedicine Barriers Among Lubbock Medicaid Patients**

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**Background:** There has been a widespread demand for virtual medicine ever since the COVID-19 pandemic. Benefits to telemedicine include less expenses for the patient and industry, reduced risk of acquiring communicable diseases, improved chronic disease management, and the elimination of traditional barriers to care (e.g. transportation, time off work, childcare, location/distance etc.). However, there are pertinent limitations, such as access to reliable internet, access to Zoom-capable technology, and technological literacy. These limitations may serve as barriers to utilizing virtual medicine as a source of health care.

**Methods:** Using retrospective chart review, we sent a Qualtrics questionnaire to Medicaid patients seen at Texas Tech Physicians Family Medicine Clinic from 2020-2022 with the aim of determining what, if any, barriers may exist regarding telemedicine access in Lubbock, TX.

**Results:** A total of 50 responses were recorded from the questionnaire. 69% of respondents reported making less than \$15,000 annually. More than half (57%) have never participated in a telemedicine health care visit before even though the majority of respondents (76%) are semi-proficient with the use of technology and 94% have heard of telemedicine as a service. 37.5% of respondents cited the COVID-19 pandemic as the reason for why they began utilizing telemedicine. 43% of respondents did not use telemedicine because they were unaware that the service was an option or available for them specifically, although almost 75% are open to using it in the future.

**Conclusions:** Telemedicine appears to be an attractive option for many Lubbock Medicaid patients to get medical care for various aspects of their health needs. The underutilization of virtual medicine can, in large part, be attributed to lack of publicity on the availability of telemedicine as part of our clinical service. By increasing awareness and usage of telemedicine, and diminishing the effects of associated barriers, telehealth has the potential to create greater equity in access to health care.