

Verizon leaps into telehealth—and here's why it could pay off

Article

Verizon is joining in on the telehealth boom: Less than a year after [acquiring](#) video conferencing platform **BlueJeans**, Verizon developed it into a telehealth platform, dubbed **BlueJeans Telehealth**, that's [launching](#) this May. BlueJeans has been piloted for telehealth via a [partnership](#) with **Epic**, where it developed the telehealth platform's EHR integration capabilities in October 2020.

Even though telehealth usage is **starting** to **plateau** after sky-high growth at the start of the pandemic, consumer interest is still there.

- Just **11%** of consumers had tried telehealth in 2019, but **46%** are using it to replace in-person visits canceled due to the pandemic, **per** the April 2020 McKinsey COVID-19 Consumer Survey.
- And **65%** of consumers say they plan to use telehealth after the pandemic ends—so the tech isn't going away any time soon.

This interest also extends to providers, who are keen to integrate telehealth as a permanent part of their practice. Over 75% of physicians said telehealth enabled them to provide quality care—and 60% said telehealth helped improve the health of their patients, **per** the 2020 Telehealth Impact Physician Survey. To add, around 50% of providers said telehealth helped the financial health of their practice.

Verizon is hopping on the virtual care train later than other entrants, but it can use its position as a major telecoms provider to hit on some of the biggest limitations to widespread adoption in the US:

- **The connectivity divide is a major pain point that's blocking many people in the US from accessing telehealth.** 80% of physicians reported that they provide telehealth visits via live, interactive video visits for an at-home patient—but over 5% of the US population (18 million people) lack sufficient broadband connection, and that figure jumps to as high as 20.7% in rural areas, **per** a November 2020 Pew Research article.
- **So, it makes sense for the telecoms giant to make a major telehealth play: Verizon's simultaneous push into 5G and telehealth is symbiotic.** While telehealth platforms like **Teladoc** and **Amwell** have strong functional capabilities, Verizon actually provides the foundation of telehealth (internet connection)—which means it's uniquely positioned to upsell its telehealth platform as 5G makes its way across the US.
- **And this isn't Verizon's first dalliance with telehealth, which will make its bigger leap into the space less bumpy.** In 2019, Verizon **teamed up** with the VA to support the VA's telehealth program. Before that, it launched its telehealth product (**Virtual Visits**) in 2014, and in 2013 it **rolled out** its FDA-approved remote patient monitoring-enabled mobile health app—both of which were **shuttered** in 2015 as Verizon reevaluated its telehealth strategy.

Value vs. Planned Usage of Select 5G Applications According to US Healthcare Industry Tech Professionals*, Nov 2020

% of respondents

	Very/somewhat likely to implement within 2 years	Very/somewhat valuable to my industry
Use of remote health monitoring technologies that collect medical and health data from individuals in one location and transmit it to providers in a different location	75%	81%
Use of mobile networks by healthcare providers for high-quality video during telemedicine visits	78%	79%
Fast and seamless sharing of large files to improve patient care	72%	79%
Complex point-of-care imaging and diagnostic services for emergency medical technicians (EMTs)	69%	79%
Wearable monitoring devices that send patient data to healthcare providers in real time	70%	78%
Real-time sharing of high-resolution 3D medical images	72%	78%
Use of more prolific artificial intelligence (AI) tools to help medical professionals to identify, diagnose, and treat patients	68%	74%
Use of 'smart objects' that respond to provider and patient needs at healthcare facilities	64%	72%
Use of augmented reality (AR), virtual reality (VR), and next-generation medical imaging to provide immersive medical training experiences	66%	72%
Use of robotic technology in high-precision procedures and surgeries	66%	71%
Use of augmented reality (AR), virtual reality (VR), and spatial computing for less invasive treatments, like physical therapy or for mental or neurological disorders	65%	69%
Deployment of drones equipped with medical emergency supplies to emergency sites	56%	65%

Note: *manager-level or higher with tech decision-making power in IT/IS infrastructure and security, application development, or wireless plans/services
Source: Verizon Business, "Verizon 5G Business Report" conducted by Morning Consult, Jan 27, 2021

263301

eMarketer | InsiderIntelligence.com