

Telehealth visits can impact after-hospitalization follow-up care for mental illness

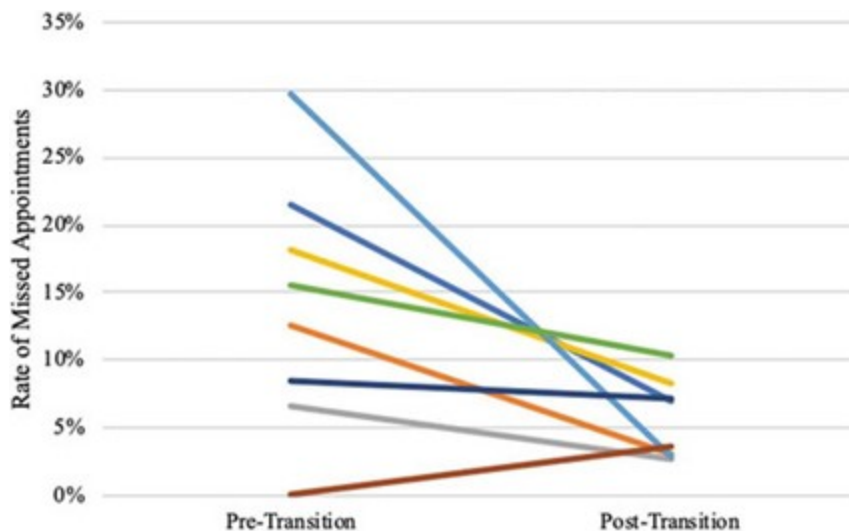
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Significant reductions in missed appointments

Telehealth visits are having a significant impact on missed appointments according to a study published in [Counselling Psychology Quarterly](#). Prior to transitioning to telehealth, clinicians in the study “Psychotherapy at a public hospital in the time of COVID-19: telehealth and implications for practice,¹” experienced a 14.25% missed appointment rate. After transitioning to telehealth, the missed appointment rate fell to 5.63%.

Rate of missed appointments before and after transitioning to telehealth

The graph below illustrates the changes in the average rate of missed appointments (cancellations and no-show) for each of the eight clinicians in the study between the periods before and after the transition to telehealth.



<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09515070.2020.1777390>

“While there are a number of limitations to consider regarding this data, [which is further discussed in the study], the statistically significant reduction in missed appointments pre-and-post [digital] transition is striking,” cited in the study report.

Telehealth and telephone visits with members after a behavioral health (BH) inpatient stay meet HEDIS® criteria for the measure: Follow-up after Hospitalization for Mental Illness (FUH). With transportation being one of the barriers to after hospitalization follow-up, telehealth visits could be an ideal solution.²

The FUH HEDIS measure evaluates:

- Members (6 years and older) who were hospitalized for treatment of selected mental illness diagnoses and who had a follow-up visit with a mental health practitioner.

Two areas of importance for this HEDIS measure are:

1. The percentage of behavioral health inpatient discharges for which the member received follow-up within 7 days after discharge.
2. The percentage of behavioral health inpatient discharges for which the member received follow-up within 30 days after discharge.

These two consecutive follow-up appointments are paramount to positive outcomes as well as meeting this HEDIS measure. Telehealth visits can greatly increase the likelihood of keeping follow-up appointments leading to reduced numbers of rehospitalization and more favorable outcomes for these patients. To learn more about the [FUH HEDIS measure](#), visit the [NCQA website](#).

HEDIS® is a registered trademark of the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA).

1 [Counselling Psychology Quarterly](#). Psychotherapy at a public hospital in the time of COVID-19: telehealth and implications for practice <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09515070.2020.1777390>

2 Traveling towards disease: transportation barriers to health care access.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4265215/#:~:text=Transportation%20barriers%20are%20often%20cited,and%20thus%20poorer%20health%20outcomes>

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