

# Demographic Characteristics of Telehealth Users and Non-Users

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## Key Takeaway

- Telehealth usage was more prevalent among beneficiaries who were under 65 years old, female, dual-eligible for Medicaid, and resided in non-rural areas.

## Policy Consideration

- Although there are slight variations in telehealth usage rates among different demographics, it is crucial to acknowledge that telehealth is widely used across all age groups, genders, races/ethnicities, rural/urban locations, and income levels.
  - While we did not examine the breakdown of telehealth modality usage (e.g., video vs phone visits) in this study, our previous research suggests that discontinuation of insurance coverage for phone visits may reduce telehealth access for patients who are older, African-American, need an interpreter, rely on Medicaid, and reside in regions with limited broadband access.
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We conducted an analysis of the demographic characteristics of Michigan Medicare fee-for-service beneficiaries who used telehealth services compared to those who did not (non-users). The results indicated that a higher percentage of patients under the age of 65 utilized telehealth services. When it came to gender, a greater proportion of females used telehealth services compared to males. We observed minimal differences in race/ethnicity between telehealth users and non-users. Furthermore, we noted that individuals residing in rural zip codes had a lower rate of telehealth use (30.8%) compared to those in non-rural areas (45.9%). Finally, we found that patients who were dual-eligible for Medicaid (a commonly used proxy for low-income) had a higher rate of telehealth usage. Overall, the trends in telehealth usage among Michigan beneficiaries were consistent with those observed at the national level.<sup>1</sup>

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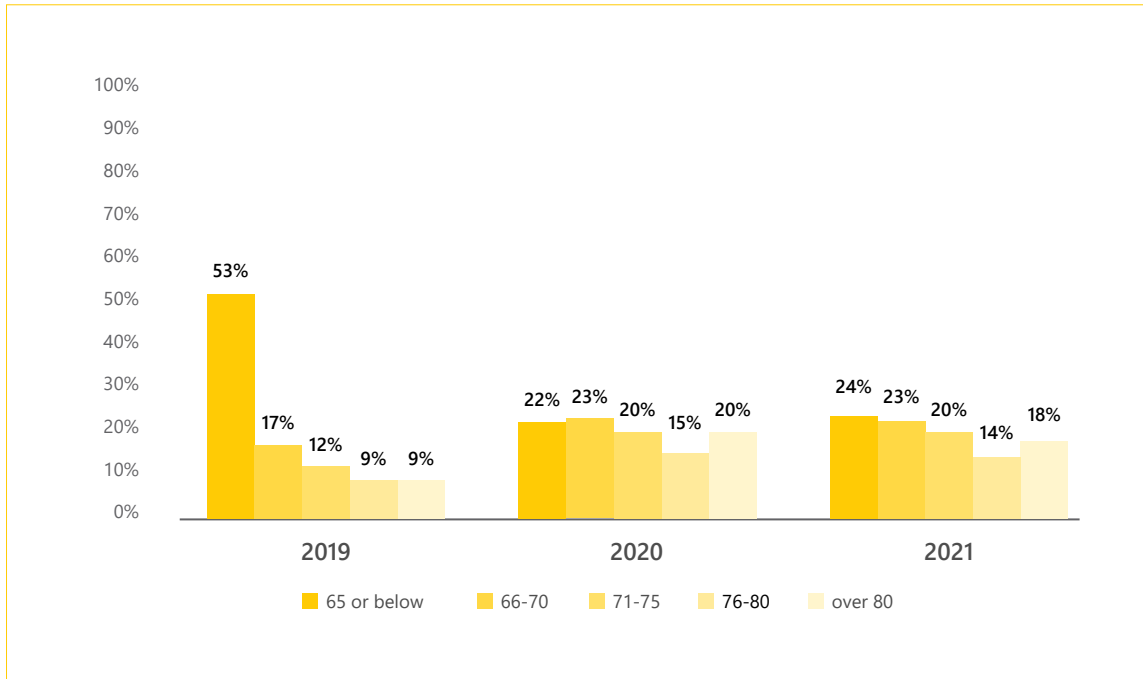
<sup>1</sup> Ellimoottil C, Zhu Z, Dunn RL, Thompson MP. Trends in telehealth use by Medicare fee-for-service beneficiaries and its impact on overall volume of healthcare services. June 21, 2022 (<https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2022.06.15.22276468v1>. opens in new tab). preprint.

**Exhibit 11: Characteristics of Telehealth Users and Non-Users, 2020**

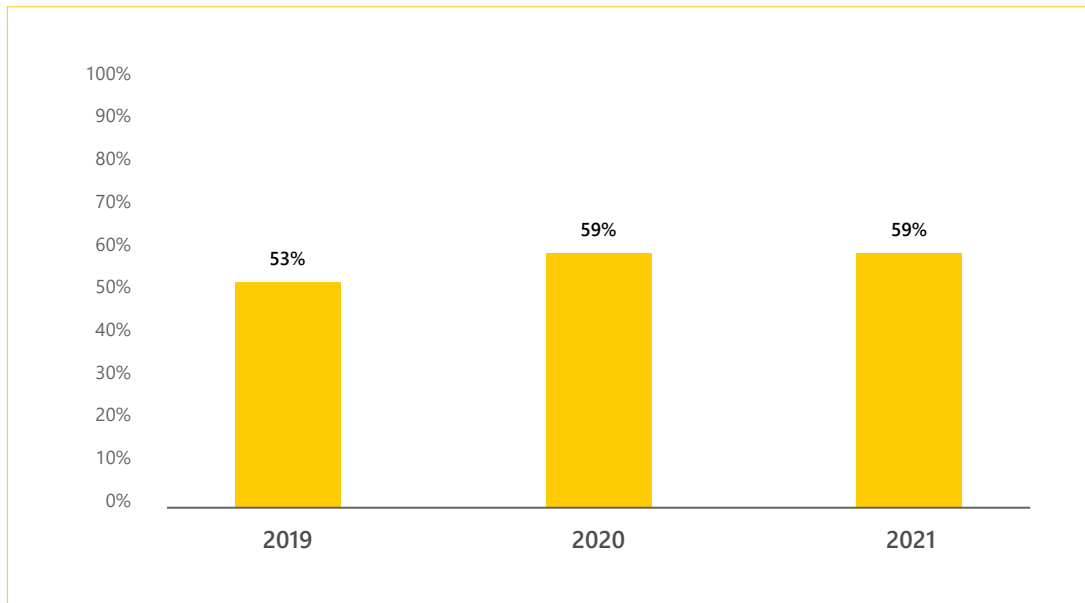
Characteristics		No.(%)	
		Telehealth user (n=386,515)	Telehealth non-user (n=541,086)
Age (%)	<=65	84,715 (21.9%)	91,419 (16.9%)
	66-70	89,570 (23.2%)	145,038 (26.8%)
	71-75	77,359 (20.0%)	112,864 (20.9%)
	76-80	57,424 (14.9%)	76,079 (14.1%)
	>80	77,447 (20.0%)	115,686 (21.4%)
Sex	Male	160,554 (41.5%)	257,347 (47.6%)
	Female	225,961 (58.5%)	283,739 (52.4%)
Race	Non-hispanic white	322,818 (83.5%)	461,417 (85.3%)
	Black (or African-American)	44,107 (11.4%)	50,301 (9.3%)
	Asian/Pacific islander	3,543 (0.9%)	5,249 (1.0%)
	Hispanic	1,690 (0.4%)	3,372 (0.6%)
	American Indian/Alaska Native	1,277 (0.3%)	2,661 (0.5%)
	Other/Unknown	13,080 (3.4%)	18,086 (3.3%)
Zip code	Rural	80,562 (20.8%)	180,998 (33.5%)
	Non-rural	305,953 (79.2%)	360,088 (66.5%)
Dual eligibility	Yes	90,223 (23.3%)	101,726 (18.8%)
	No	296,292 (76.7%)	439,360 (81.2%)

Furthermore, we investigated how demographic trends evolved over time among Medicare fee-for-service beneficiaries who utilized telehealth services. Our findings indicated a significant shift across all demographics between 2019 and 2020. However, thereafter, there were only slight variations observed in terms of age, race, gender, and rural/urban residence.

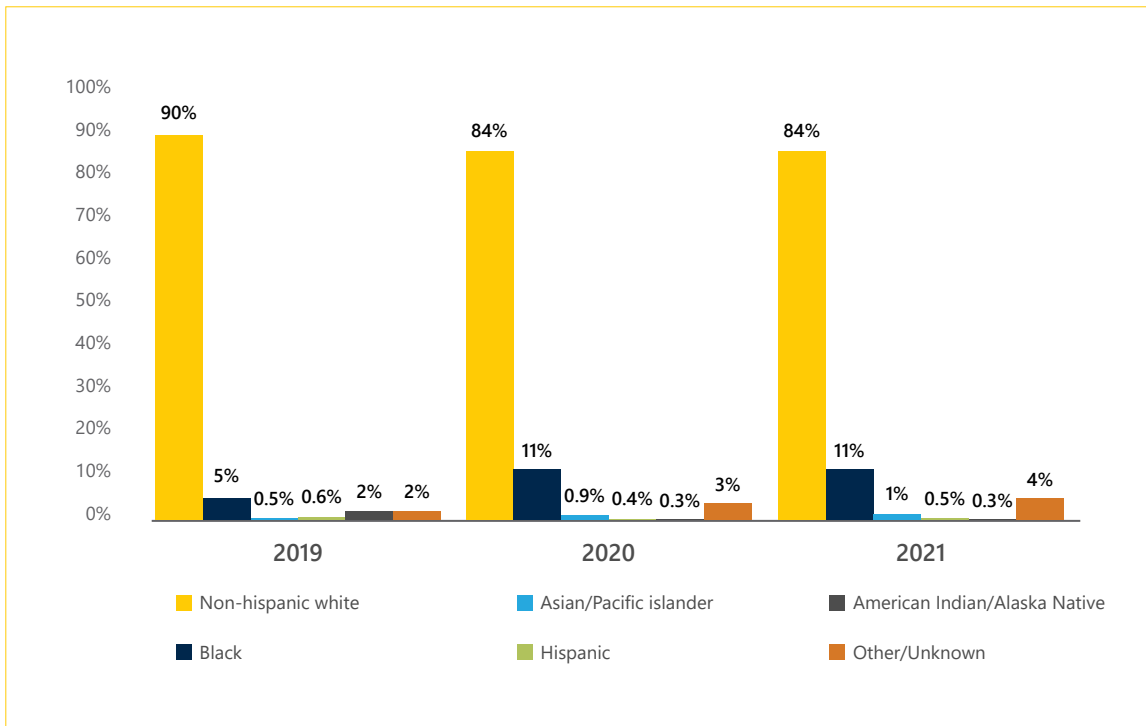
### Exhibit 12: Telehealth User Proportions by Age, 2019-2021



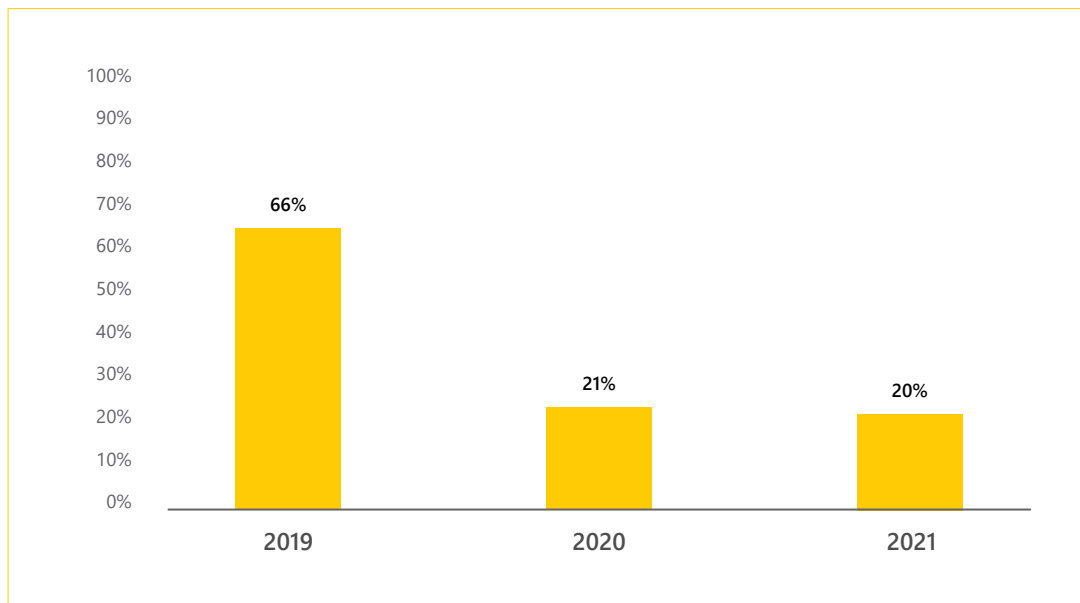
**Exhibit 13: Percentage of Telehealth Users that Were Female, 2019-2021**



### Exhibit 14: Telehealth User Proportions by Race/Ethnicity, 2019-2021



## Exhibit 15: Percentage of Telehealth Users that Lived in Rural Zip Codes, 2019-2021



A limitation of our analysis is that we did not examine the breakdown of telehealth modality usage (e.g., video vs. phone visits) by demographics. In a previous study utilizing data from Michigan Medicine, we discovered that patients who were older, African-American, needed an interpreter, relied on Medicaid, and resided in regions with limited broadband access were less likely to utilize video visits as opposed to phone visits.<sup>2</sup> The discontinuation of insurance coverage for phone visits under post-pandemic policies may reduce telehealth access for patients who exhibit one or more of these characteristics.

<sup>2</sup> Chen J, Li KY, Andino J, Hill CE, Ng S, Steppe E, Ellimoottil C. Predictors of audio-only versus video telehealth visits during the COVID-19 pandemic. *J Gen Intern Med.* 2022 Apr;37(5):1138-1144.