Getting your outpatient practice functioning: Risks, tips and insights

David L Feldman, MD MBA CPE FAAPL FACS

- **Senior Vice-President & Chief Medical Officer, Healthcare Risk Advisors**
- **Chief Medical Officer, The Doctors Company Group**
- **T: 212.891.0773 | dfeldman@tdchra.com**

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Polling

1. **What percentage of your facility/practice outpatient visits used telemedicine prior to the pandemic?**

- **a. <25%**
- **b. 25-50%**
- **c. 50-75%**
- **d. >75%**

2. **What percentage of your facility/practice outpatient visits currently use telemedicine?**

- **a. <25%**
- **b. 25-50%**
- **c. 50-75%**
- **d. >75%**

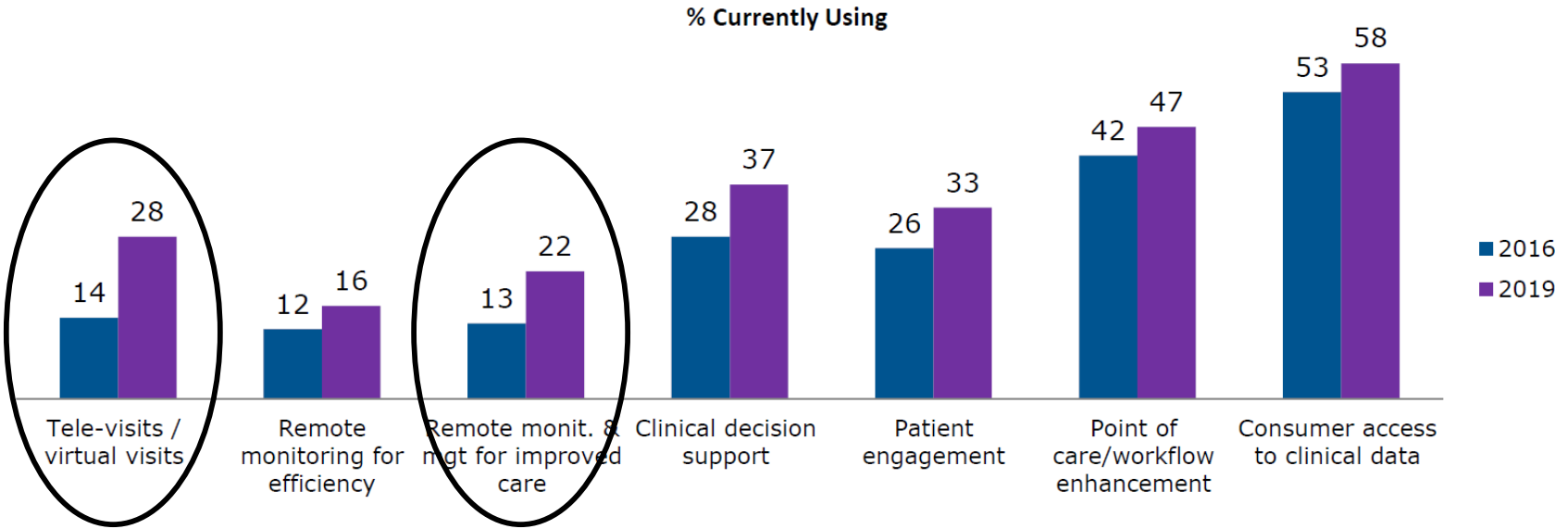
3. **What is the biggest impediment to your outpatient visit telemedicine use?**

- **a. Data privacy**
- **b. Lack of provider interest**
- **c. Legal, malpractice issues**
- **d. Patients inability (eg. No smartphones, language barriers)**
- **e. Reimbursement**
- **f. Technical issues**

State of Digital Health Tools

Use of digital health tools has risen significantly

Tele-visits have seen the greatest growth, doubling in use since 2016.



Q20. Which, if any, of these do you currently incorporate into your practice? Base: Total Physicians (n=1300)

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AMA Digital Health Research. February, 2020

AMA

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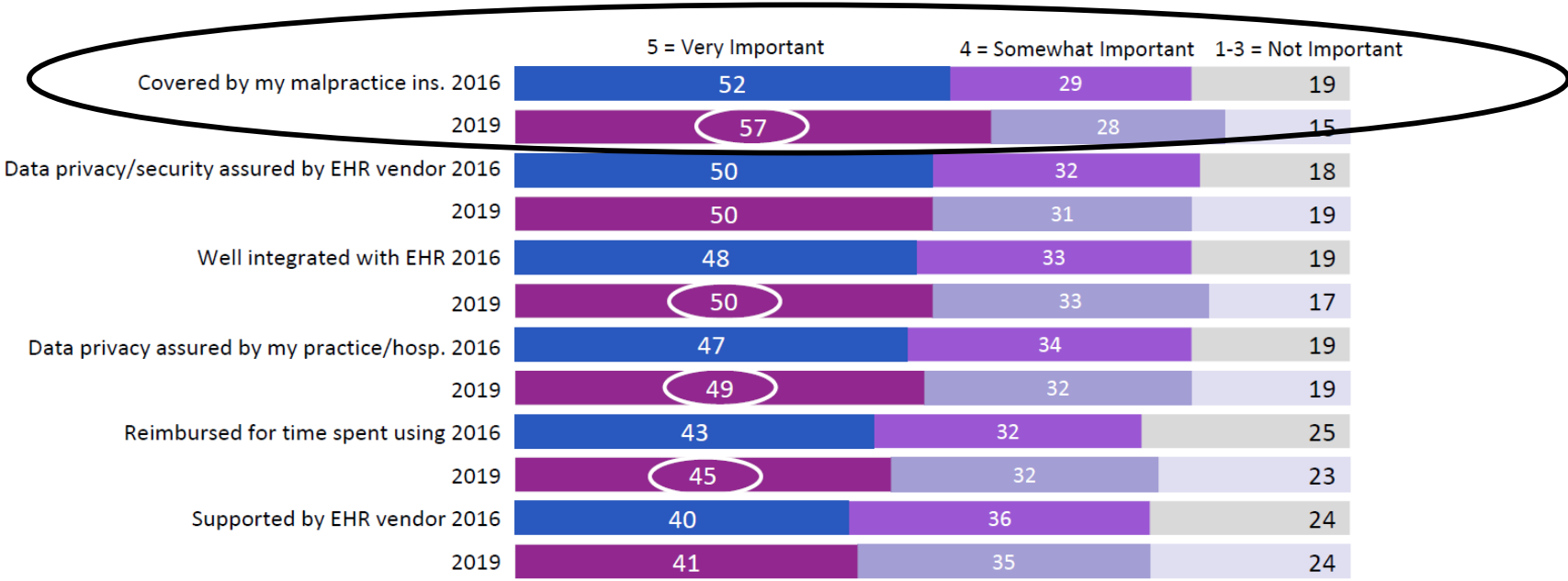
Telehealth and Malpractice

The importance of digital health tools being covered by standard malpractice insurance has increased significantly as a requirement



Q18. How important are each of the attributes below in facilitating the adoption of digital health solutions into your practice? Base: Total Physicians (n=1300)

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AMA Digital Health Research. February, 2020

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Telehealth Barriers

- **Telemedicine is “too hard”**
- **Patients prioritize relationships over transactional care**
- **The physical examination cannot be redefined**
- **Virtual visits are not effective**
- **There is no business model**

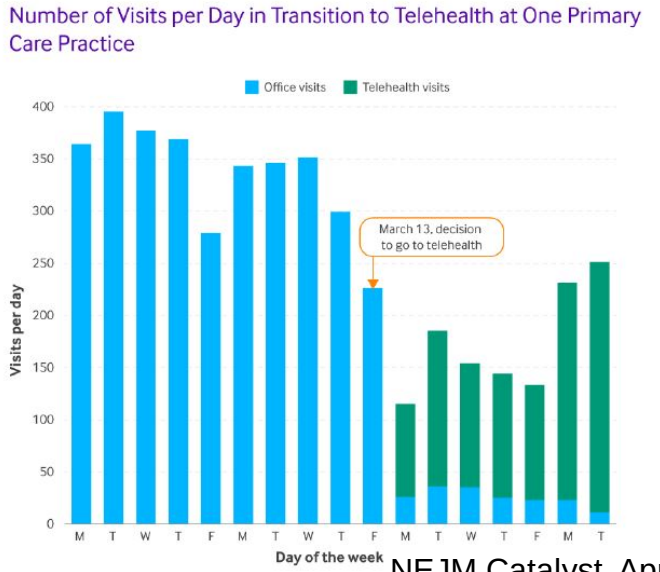
NEJM Catalyst. April 1, 2020

Telehealth & Coronavirus

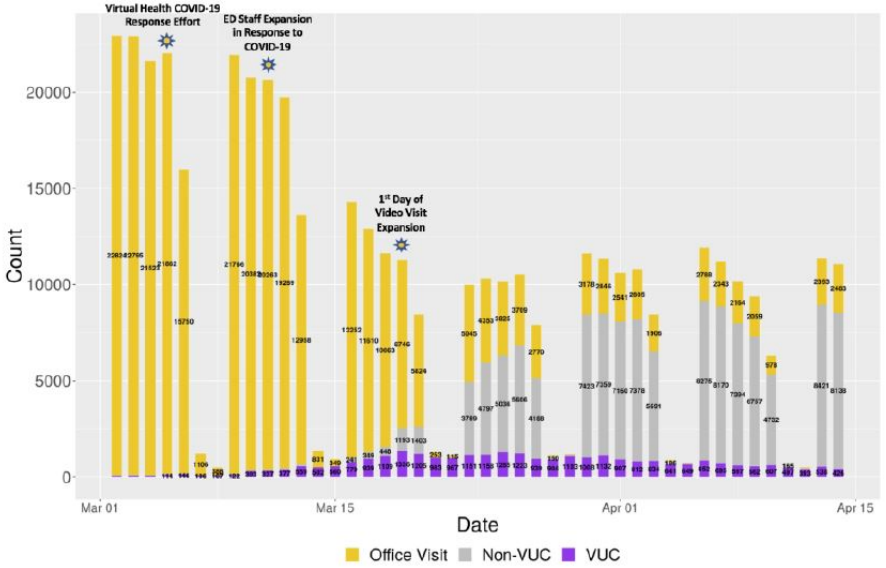
"The pandemic forced the alignment of the policy, technology, and economics of telemedicine."

Am J Med Qual. June, 2020

FIGURE 1



NEJM Catalyst. April 1, 2020



Am J Med Inf Assoc. May 5, 2020

"What had been a painstakingly slow process prior to the pandemic became a lightning-speed transition."

NEJM Catalyst. May 15, 2020

Key Risks to Understand in Telehealth

State Licensing

- Potential “criminal offense”
- Malpractice coverage (venues)
- The Interstate Medical Licensure Compact (https://imlcc.org/)

Physician-Patient Relationship

- First visit requirements
- Nature of visit (i.e. emergency, prescriptions)

Technology - HIPAA

Patient’s environment

Documentation

Informed Consent

- State-specific requirements
- Names and credentials of staff participating
- Right to stop or refuse treatment by telemedicine
- Technology that will be used
- Privacy and security risks
- Technology specific risks
- Permission to bill
- Alternative care in case of an emergency or malfunction
- Ideally both a signed consent form and note in the chart

Telehealth Tips

“Web-side” manner

- Camera at eye level
- Clothes that work best on a video screen
- Badges are visible to the patient
- Removing visual distractions from behind the clinician

Pre-visit - workflow

Physical examination

- Ottawa Rules
- Roth Score

Options – native, stand alone, hybrid

Telehealth and Outpatient Clinics

- **Patients will want to minimize visits to all healthcare facilities**
- **Behavioral health, esp. opioid related care**
- **Patients may not have appropriate technology resources**
- **Resident supervision during telehealth visits**
- **Translation services**
- **“No-show” protocol**

Survey of Safety Net Patients:

75% owned a cell phone

65% interested in telehealth (40%>65 y.o.)

60% use phone for internet

Health Affairs. August, 2020

Telehealth Resources

The Doctors Company

- ***https://www.thedoctors.com/articles/covid-19-telehealth-resource-center/***

American Telemedicine Association (americantelemed.org)

American Medical Association (ama-assn.org)

- ***Ethical practice in Telehealth and Telemedicine*, 2017**

American Society of Healthcare Risk Management (ashrm.org)

- ***TELEMEDICINE Risk Management Considerations, 2018***

Center for Connected Health Policy (cchpca.org)

- ***https://www.cchpca.org/resources/covid-19-telehealth-coverage-policies***