

How Telemedicine Can Revolutionize the Healthcare Market

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Credit: Storyblocks [1]

By Bianca Heyward

In today's world, you don't need to schedule an appointment and go to the doctor's office to check up on your health. Telemedicine is the use of information technology that allows patients to be treated and diagnosed by a doctor without having to be physically present; it's the first big step toward digitizing healthcare. With telemedicine on the rise, healthcare and treatment are no longer bound to the confines to four white walls and waiting rooms. Companies now offer direct-to-consumer care via apps available on mobile phones and websites where anyone can speak to a licensed doctor in a matter of minutes from the comfort and privacy of your own home.

Telemedicine is breaking barriers in the field by effectively providing cheaper and easily accessible healthcare to everyone; from people in disenfranchised communities all over the world to those who live in remote locations, and individuals who are weak or in fragile condition. Doctors can offer services for cheaper since they don't have to pay for the overhead space by using phone or video conferencing in place of in-person interaction. For patients seeking non-emergency room treatment, telemedicine removes financial and physical obstacles from the equation, helping more people have access to healthcare.

When flu season comes around or the common cold strikes, telemedicine companies have been able to cut out costly visits to the emergency room or urgent care and connect you virtually with a certified physician. A doctor can treat you from your bed in real time via live audio or video conferencing and call in a prescription to the nearest pharmacy without you ever having to make an appointment. The average telehealth visits cost a patient around \$40, whereas an in-person

visit to treat the same thing can be as much as \$170. According to the [American Bar Association](#) [2], almost every state in the country has passed some form of reimbursement laws for patients using telemedicine. Of course, fees vary depending on your healthcare provider, employer, and the kind of treatment.

The nation's largest telemedicine provider, [MDLIVE](#) [3], has a network of board-certified doctors available 24/7 regardless of holidays or late hours that can meet with you virtually and talk through symptoms, treatments, and medications. Through the app or website, you can chat with a professional who offers their services for over 50 minor illnesses such as sore throats, pink eye, rashes, urinary tract infections, and more. Additionally, behavioral health specialists and counselors are available to help with everything from anxiety, to stress, and PTSD.

[Teladoc](#) [4], another leading telemedicine company, serves patients across 125 different countries with over 2 million virtual care visits to boast. Whether through the app or the website, they too use telephone and videoconference technology to connect people with top doctors in 10 minutes or less.

When creating your account and signing up, the apps guide you through a series of different questions, collecting your personal medical history and data. Instead of filling out all the paperwork that patients are typically handed in a waiting room, telemedicine technology facilitates a speedy and efficient clinical process.

There are a growing number of specialized telemedicine companies that focus on one area of care, as well. [HerpAlert](#) [5], an app specifically for the diagnosis and treatment of genital herpes and cold sores, takes away any shame or embarrassment a patient may feel at the onset of symptoms. If treated within 12 to 24 hours, starting medication for HSV-1 and HSV-2 can hurry the healing process for sores and lessen the severity of an outbreak.

Due to the stigma surrounding STD's, those who suspect they have contracted one historically have been hesitant to schedule an appointment to see a doctor. By waiting, symptoms can worsen. However, this application provides immediate and confidential care from the privacy of your home. As with other telemedicine companies, all the patient needs to do is send a picture of the affected area through a private patient portal and a specialist will come back with a diagnosis and treatment plan.

Telemedicine is a first step towards digitizing the world of medicine while improving and increasing access to care and reducing out-of-pocket costs.

This article was provided by HerpAlert. The author, Bianca Heyward, is a freelance writer and journalist based in Los Angeles.

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