

# The Telehealth Era Is Just Beginning

by Robert Pearl and Brian Wayling  
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**Summary:** Contrary to what many people think, virtual health care, also known as telemedicine or telehealth, is much more than a cheap digital knockoff of in-person care. When used appropriately, it improves patient health, reduces costs, and makes care more equitable and accessible to anyone with a smartphone. Its use has soared during the Covid era—and the authors argue that providers around the world should aggressively strive to tap its full potential even after the pandemic abates.

Pearl and Wayling take readers inside Kaiser Permanente and Intermountain Healthcare, two of telehealth’s earliest adopters and most effective users in the United States. They show how telehealth can:

- Reduce expensive and unnecessary trips to the ER
- Reduce America’s chronic-disease crisis, address disparities in care
- Make specialty care faster and more efficient, and
- Provide access to the best doctors.

Pearl and Wayling outline what’s needed to spur adoption to a fully telehealth-driven system. Employers, who currently provide health insurance coverage to nearly half the U.S. population, could drive such a change by banding together and designing new reimbursement and care delivery approaches. The resulting savings could amount to tens of billions of dollars a year.

Full Article: <https://hbr.org/2022/05/the-telehealth-era-is-just-beginning>