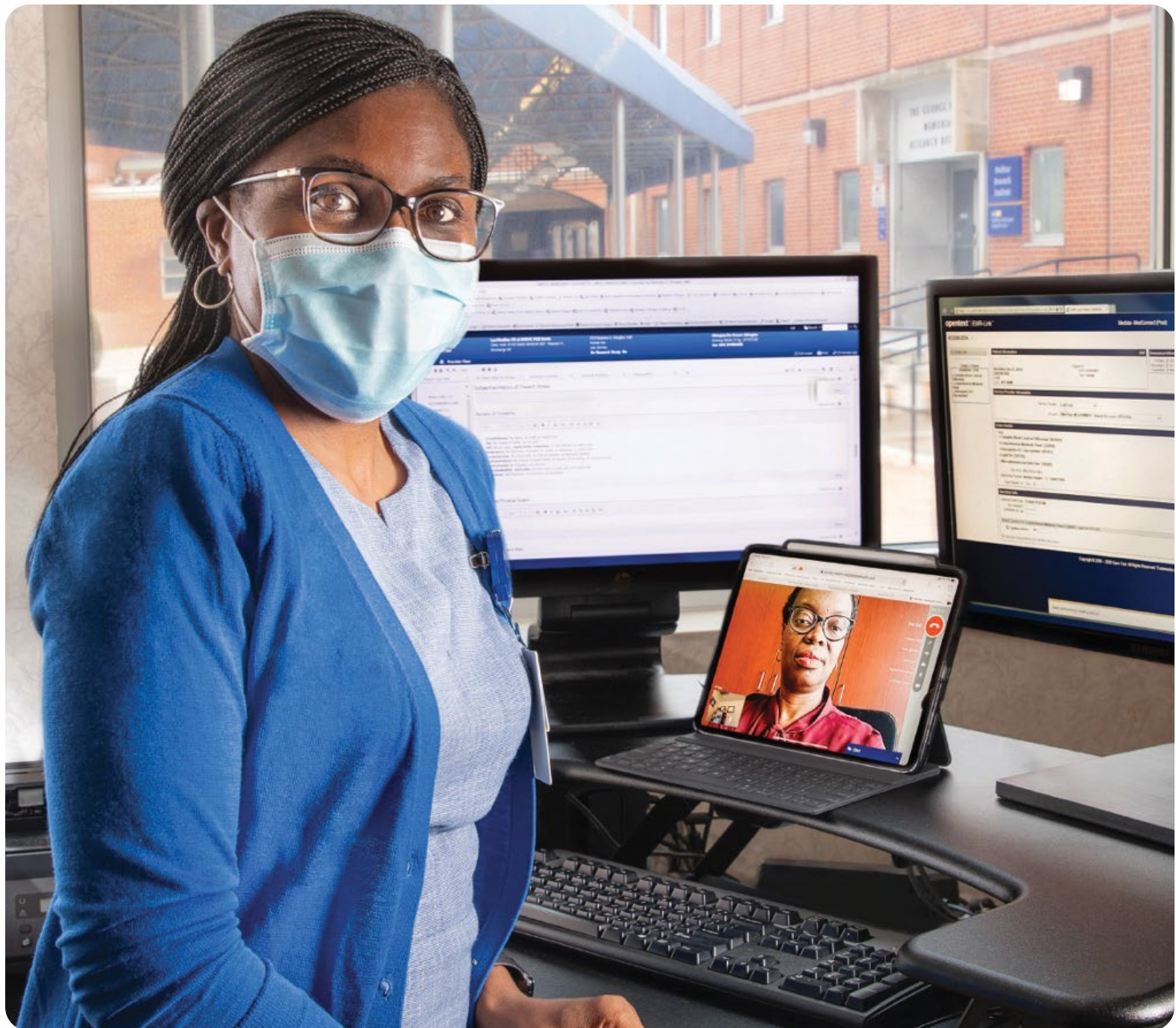




MedStar Health

One year of historic change and care: **COVID-19 telehealth response.**



Telehealth: Enhancing care delivery

At MedStar Health, we use the best of our minds and the best of our hearts to serve our patients, those who care for them, and our communities. MedStar Health strives to provide the highest quality of care for people in Maryland, Virginia, and Washington, D.C., with compassion and respect at the center of all that we do. We know that our ability to treat others well begins with how we treat each other. Our 30,000 associates and 5,400 affiliated physicians are committed to living our core SPIRIT values—Service, Patient First, Integrity, Respect, Innovation, and Teamwork—no matter where they work across our diverse and expansive health system.

We treat one in five patients within the region and continuously strive to provide quality and innovative health care to those we serve. Now, more than ever, MedStar Health recognizes how important it is to make the care we provide more convenient and accessible to the communities we serve. We continue to evolve how we deliver care and remove barriers for our patients, particularly those in underserved and under-resourced communities. By using tools like telehealth, MedStar Health has been able to extend the reach of our providers and bring care directly to our patients: improving access, increasing convenience, and enhancing efficiency.

MedStar Telehealth Innovation Center

In 2017, after years of foundational telehealth work, MedStar Health and MedStar Institute for Innovation recognized the incredible value of scaling telehealth and established the MedStar Telehealth Innovation Center to support and coordinate telehealth activities across the system. The formal creation of this center was a natural step on our trajectory toward expanding a healthcare system that is fully connected to patients in need, responsive to our providers' requests for expanded telehealth capabilities, and aligned with the increasing role of telehealth across our nation.

The center provides telehealth infrastructure, best practices, subject matter expertise, project implementation, and programmatic operational support on a systemwide scale. Our telehealth team partners with clinical service lines and business entities to help launch and shape new models of telehealth-enabled care delivery. They also work closely with telehealth technology providers and advocates, policymakers, and other stakeholders to keep MedStar Health aligned with the ever-evolving world of digital health and remote care technologies.

COVID-19 response at MedStar Telehealth Innovation Center



In early 2020, MedStar Health was largely still in the initial phases of expanding telehealth offerings. New programs were being launched while other more established programs were beginning to scale to additional sites. While rather small in scope, through these initial telehealth activities, the center had laid the groundwork for a robust and sustainable telehealth infrastructure across MedStar Health.

By mid-March, the need for telehealth services skyrocketed with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. The center has been resilient and responsive in the face of this critical need, increasing telehealth capacity across the entire MedStar Health system of care. In order to maintain the health of the communities the system serves, MedStar Health prioritized rapidly scaling up telehealth solutions in its immediate response to COVID-19, as well as in preparation for an altered post-pandemic healthcare landscape.

In particular, to better meet the needs of patients who would otherwise cancel or postpone routine in-person ambulatory care in the face of COVID-19, the center rapidly built and scaled a new telehealth offering called MedStar Health Video Visits. This telehealth platform was made available to more than 4,000 providers in one week's time, affording them the ability to use telehealth for scheduled office visits with their patients. This platform was soon expanded to the hospital setting to further minimize potential exposure to infection and to enable patients to have video visits with loved ones while visitor restrictions were in place for everyone's safety. These new offerings complemented previously established telehealth tools that also fueled the system's COVID-19 response, providing urgent care video visits on demand, teletriage within our emergency departments, and much more.

Core telehealth services

MedStar eVisit

Patient-initiated, on-demand urgent care video visits offered 24 hours a day, seven days a week. This service allows patients to access trusted medical providers via video chat for urgent, non-emergency healthcare needs without an appointment, now including COVID-19 concerns.

MedStar Health Video Visits

Scheduled video appointments between patients and primary care and specialty providers. This platform was built and launched at scale within days during the COVID-19 pandemic and is designed to ease access to care for our patients.

MedStar Health eConsults

Inpatient and facility-based telehealth services often conducted between two providers for patient evaluation or professional consultation. MedStar eConsults also enable provider-to-patient and patient-to-family connections.



To support these initiatives, a new telehealth operations and support center was also built from the ground up. It provided online education and training as well as live phone and email support to patients and providers seven days a week.

Overall, supporting the crisis response in these ways grew the team from a center of 10 part-time to full-time contributors, to more than 300 associates and volunteers (beyond clinical telehealth providers) over time.

For context about the scale and reception of the COVID-19 telehealth response, between mid-March 2020 and 2021, MedStar Health delivered more than 772,750 telehealth sessions. Prior to the pandemic, reaching 100,000 telehealth sessions was considered a significant milestone in a telehealth team's history. Outpatient telehealth, in particular, has grown exponentially. While less than 10 sessions a day was typical pre-pandemic volume, COVID-19 volumes climbed to thousands of outpatient telehealth sessions a day. Also critically important to us, in more than 251,500 plus survey responses during the pandemic, patients gave our providers and our platforms excellent overall average ratings by year-end.

MedStar Health Telehealth COVID-19 response: Year of impact by the numbers

Mid-March 2020 to mid-March 2021 estimates, unless noted otherwise.

- 2017** Year MedStar Telehealth Innovation Center launched, years after related work began
...provided the critical foundation that enabled our rapid crisis response
- <10** Outpatient telehealth sessions delivered in an average weekday, pre-pandemic
...climbed to more than 3,600 per day within the first month of response
- 300+** Associates and volunteers supporting the center beyond clinical telehealth providers
...up from 10 part and full-time staff, and now including medical students
- 19,070+** Patient and provider calls to the Telehealth Operations and Support Center (TOSC)
...a team created and providing support 7 days a week during COVID-19 for telehealth questions
- 30,840+** Emails from patients or providers answered by our TOSC
...in addition to other online training and reference resources for telehealth questions
- 67,350+** MedStar eVisit sessions delivered
...on-demand urgent care by video, scaled and staffed by our providers
- 89,400** MedStar Health eConsults delivered
...inpatient and facility-based offerings for providers, patients, and families
- 173,880+** Audio only patient phone visits across most ambulatory sites
...helping patients access care, especially with limited technology, connectivity, etc.
- 251,500+** Patient reviews of telehealth—with excellent overall ratings
...for both platform and provider satisfaction
- 616,000** MedStar Health Video Visits delivered
...scheduled video visits launched during COVID-19, now around 80% of overall telehealth volume
- 772,750+** Overall telehealth sessions delivered (without audio only)
...hit half million by October; reaching 100,000 pre-pandemic was newsworthy

Telehealth expansion looking past COVID-19



The incredible impact of telehealth during the pandemic has demonstrated the importance of sustaining and expanding these services. MedStar Health is committed to continuing and growing the use of telehealth as a core component of how we deliver health care. Our telehealth system, which focuses on the continuum of care and not just on digital technology, is now being used by more patients and providers than ever before, which speaks to the quality, cost effectiveness, and user experience benefits of this approach to health care.

As we look to the future, we see the opportunity to overlay this model across our entire health system. Our primary aim is to extend the level of care utilization and create a continuum of care for all our patients. We can do this by embracing standardized and virtualized patient management and having centralized resources for patient support services, such as appointment scheduling.

Overall, further expanding and advancing telehealth will allow:

- Decreasing the workload of inpatient nursing by facilitating communication between patients, families, and care teams.
- Greater access to care by allowing primary care doctors more capacity.
- Expansion of the ability to see one's own doctor for urgent and on-demand issues.
- More opportunity for patient-directed care at home through data and education made available through remote patient monitoring.
- Further expanding the reach of specialists to ensure that patients throughout the area have access to the highly-skilled experts at MedStar Health.
- More rapid consultation between doctors to coordinate care for patients without multiple doctor's visits.
- Further expansion of options and access for behavioral health.
- Options for clinical experts to guide navigation through a healthcare need.

Supporting our work in these ways is a transformative, achievable next step in the evolution of our telehealth services. The future is ever-changing and, as such, further preparation for a hybrid telehealth and in-person model of the medical landscape is a necessity. We anticipate that the need for telehealth advances will only increase for future generations of patients.

Thank you

Growing telehealth before, during, and after COVID-19 is an incredible effort made possible by many partners across MedStar Health—a true story of a healthcare system in action, complementing other remarkable pandemic response and care transformation work. Our telehealth growth has also been enabled by exceptional external collaborators, as well as the patients and families we serve. During a most critical time, our communities trusted us and our vision to continue caring for patients and advancing health. We are truly grateful.

To learn more about accessing telehealth via MedStar Health, visit **MedStarHealth.org**.

For additional information about the MedStar Telehealth Innovation Center, visit **MI2.MedStarHealth.org**.

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MedStar Health

It's how we **treat people.**