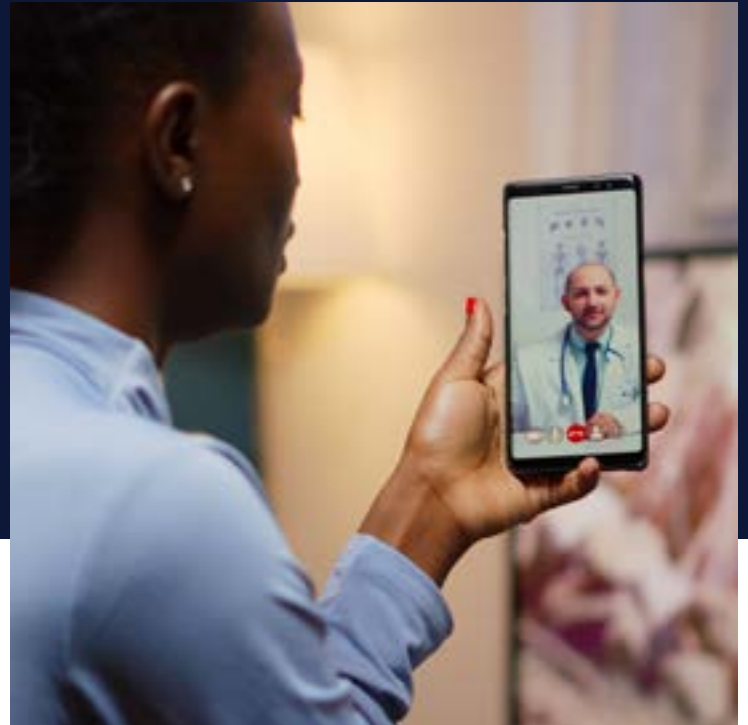


5-Step payer guide to supporting telehealth adoption



Before the spring of 2020, telehealth adoption was low, but growing. A global healthcare crisis changed those statistics—suddenly, it became unsafe to visit a doctor's office for fear the doctor or patient might spread a deadly disease.

As we begin the long journey to recovery, patients want to see telehealth services become a permanent part of the healthcare landscape. Read on to learn what steps telehealth payers can take to increase telehealth adoption among providers.

WHY PAYERS SHOULD WORK TO BOOST TELEHEALTH ADOPTION

There are two reasons payers should boost telehealth adoption:

- It's cost-effective
- Patients want it

TELEHEALTH SERVICES ARE COST-EFFECTIVE

PwC released a report at the beginning of 2021 detailing how [costs had risen for healthcare payers](#) the previous year. In 2021, costs could rise anywhere from four to 10%. Yet, there are also ways to reduce healthcare costs, and those methods lie in increased telehealth adoption.

The [typical cost of a telehealth visit is \\$50](#), while the average weighted cost for care at alternative sites runs payers \$176. That's a difference of \$126.

PATIENTS WANT TELEHEALTH SERVICES

Even after the public health crisis ends, patients still want to use telehealth services.

A study published by Accenture in the summer of 2020 revealed [60% of patients](#) want to use telehealth services going forward. It's not hard to understand why—telehealth services are more convenient. Patients don't have to take time off work and travel to an appointment, exposing themselves to germs. They can see their provider from the comfort of their own home.

WHAT STEPS CAN TELEHEALTH PAYERS TAKE TO BOOST TELEHEALTH ADOPTION?

Telehealth payers can take the following steps to boost telehealth adoption among providers:

- Reimbursing telehealth providers at a realistic rate
- Providing incentives to offer telehealth services
- Partnering with telehealth providers who already offer telehealth services
- Investing in telehealth services delivery models that are secure
- Collaborating with telehealth providers to make the transition smoother

STEP 1: REIMBURSE TELEHEALTH PROVIDERS AT A REALISTIC RATE

Before the public healthcare crisis in 2020, one of the most significant barriers for telehealth adoption was [low or nonexistent telehealth reimbursement for telehealth services](#). Health insurers covered few telehealth services, and the reimbursements they provided to telehealth providers were quite low.

For telehealth adoption to rise among providers, payers need to reimburse telehealth providers at a rate that encourages them to offer those services. During the public healthcare crisis in 2020, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid [announced payment parity](#) for telehealth services, making them a viable option for providers.

STEP 2: PROVIDE INCENTIVES FOR PROVIDERS TO OFFER TELEHEALTH SERVICES

In addition to payment parity (or improved telehealth reimbursement), providers might be more willing to offer telehealth services if telehealth payers gave them additional incentives to do so.

Perhaps those incentives could be cash, or there could be another kind of reward program put in place which would encourage providers to boost telehealth adoption.

STEP 3: PARTNER WITH TELEHEALTH PROVIDERS WHO ALREADY OFFER TELEHEALTH SERVICES

Payers looking to boost telehealth adoption should consider creative solutions. The consultancy firm Bain & Company recommends [partnering with telehealth providers](#) who already have experience offering those services to patients.

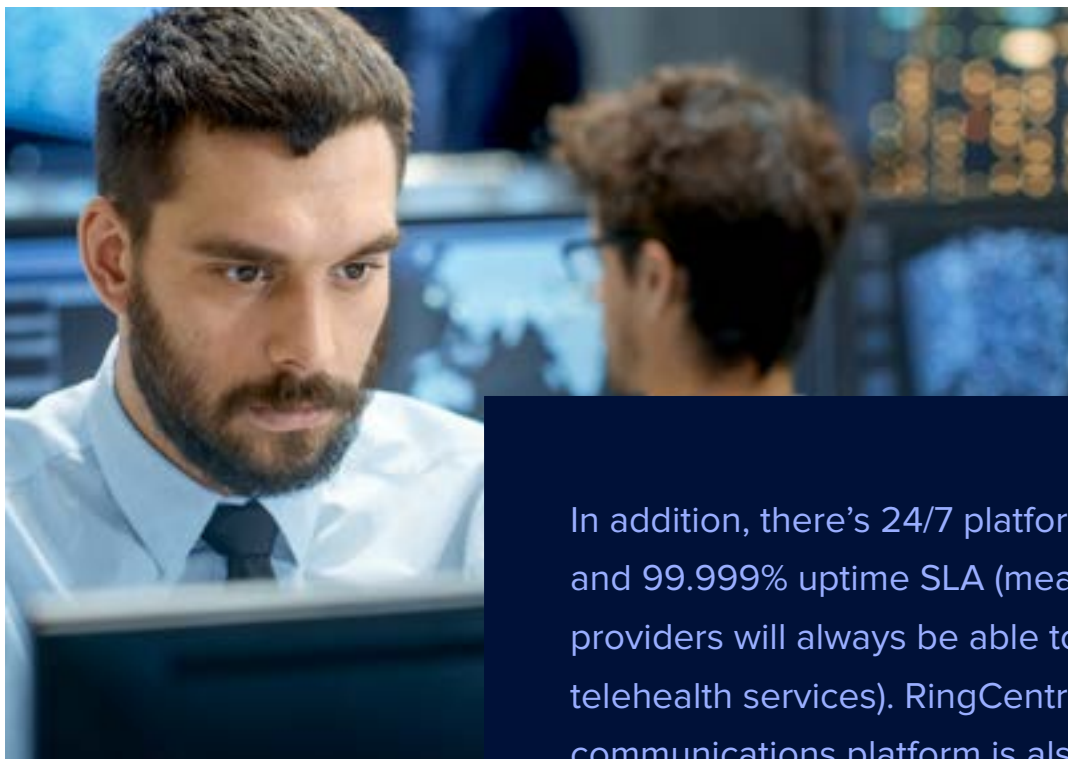
For example, if there's already a medical practice or a company that offers telehealth services, a telehealth payer could partner with them and alert patients that this organization was now in the network. It would send a strong signal to other providers that providing telehealth services is desirable to telehealth payers and will be rewarded.

STEP 4: INVEST IN TELEHEALTH MODELS THAT ARE SECURE

A major concern among providers and patients is the [security of telehealth platforms](#). During the course of the public healthcare crisis, there were reports of hackers hijacking virtual appointments. Providers and patients expressed concerns about healthcare data security.

Telehealth payers can allay those fears by investing in secure telehealth communications platforms. For example, RingCentral's telehealth communications platform offers [seven layers of security](#):

- Enterprise organization
- Business processes
- Host
- Physical
- Application
- Network
- Data



In addition, there's 24/7 platform monitoring, and 99.999% uptime SLA (meaning that providers will always be able to deliver telehealth services). RingCentral's telehealth communications platform is also HITRUST CSF-certified, meaning that it's part of an elite group of organizations that have met industry-defined security and risk management requirements.

STEP 5:
**COLLABORATE WITH
TELEHEALTH PROVIDERS
TO MAKE THE TRANSITION
SMOOTHER**

The role that telehealth payers play in boosting telehealth adoption goes beyond reimbursing providers at a reasonable rate. It even goes beyond offering incentives. Telehealth providers must show that they support providers at every step of their telehealth adoption journeys—from the beginning to post-implementation.

What does that kind of support look like? It could be a dedicated hotline at a telehealth payer organization for providers to contact if they run into issues with a telehealth solution.

[The relationship between providers and payers](#) has sometimes been adversarial. It would be less adversarial if payers made it easier for providers to reach out to them with questions about claims. When telehealth payers implement the right collaboration tools, they can easily share information with providers (and vice versa).

**RINGCENTRAL'S TELEHEALTH
COMMUNICATIONS
PLATFORM CAN BOOST
TELEHEALTH ADOPTION**

RingCentral's robust, feature-rich telehealth communications platform boosts telehealth adoption among providers thanks to its ease of use and security. [Provide better healthcare outcomes at a lower cost. Cloud communications systems are transforming healthcare. Find out how.](#)

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