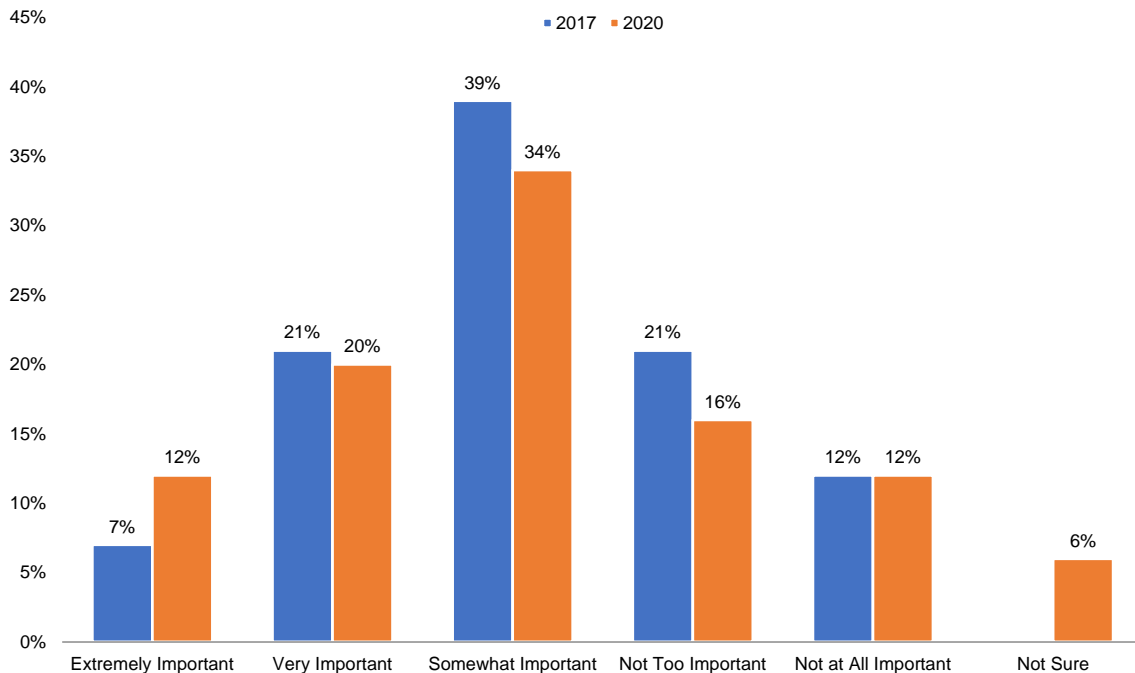


Telemedicine During the COVID-19 Pandemic

The percentage of adults with private health insurance reporting that telemedicine was an extremely important option for getting medical care nearly doubled between 2017 and 2020, according to results from the Employee Benefit Research Institute (EBRI) and Greenwald Research's Consumer Engagement in Health Care Survey.

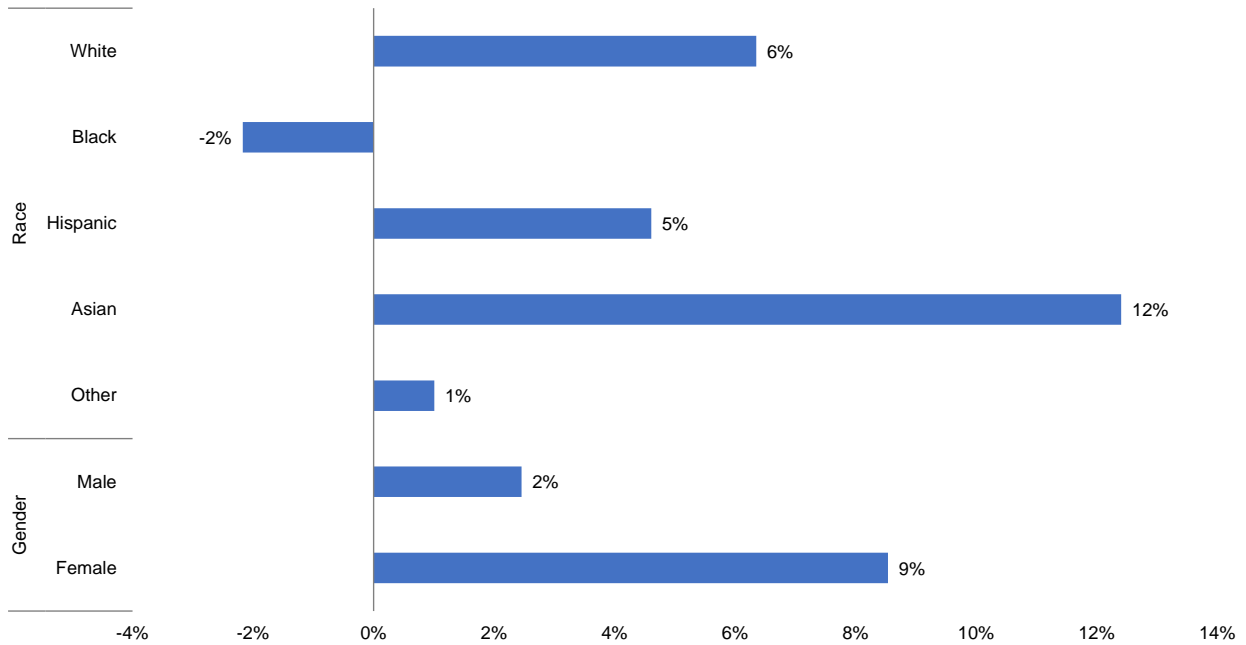
In 2020 — which, of course, has been marked by the COVID-19 pandemic and associated restrictions and shutdowns — 12 percent of adults reported that a telemedicine option was extremely important, up from 7 percent in 2017 (Figure 1). Overall, however, the percentage of those reporting that telemedicine was important to *any* degree remained steady between 2017 and 2020, with fewer reporting it was somewhat important in 2020 vs. 2017. Groups that were more likely to report that telemedicine was extremely important in 2020 over 2017 included whites, Asians, and women (Figure 2).

Figure 1
How do you rate the importance of having telemedicine as an option for getting medical care in certain situations?



Source: EBRI/Greenwald Research Consumer Engagement in Health Care Survey, 2020.

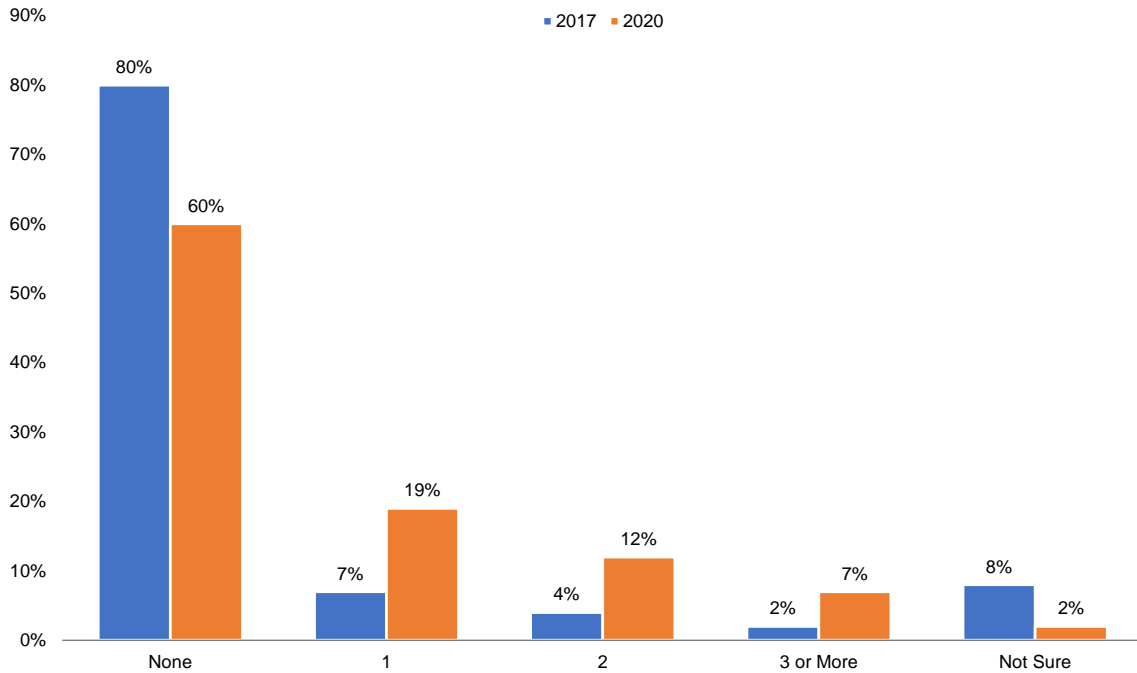
Figure 2
Change in Percentage Reporting Telemedicine Was Extremely Important Between 2017 and 2020



Source: EBRI/Greenwald Research Consumer Engagement in Health Care Survey, 2020.

Actual use of telemedicine dramatically increased between 2017 and 2020. In 2020, 40 percent of adults reported that they or a family member had at least one telemedicine visit, up from 20 percent in 2017 (Figure 3).

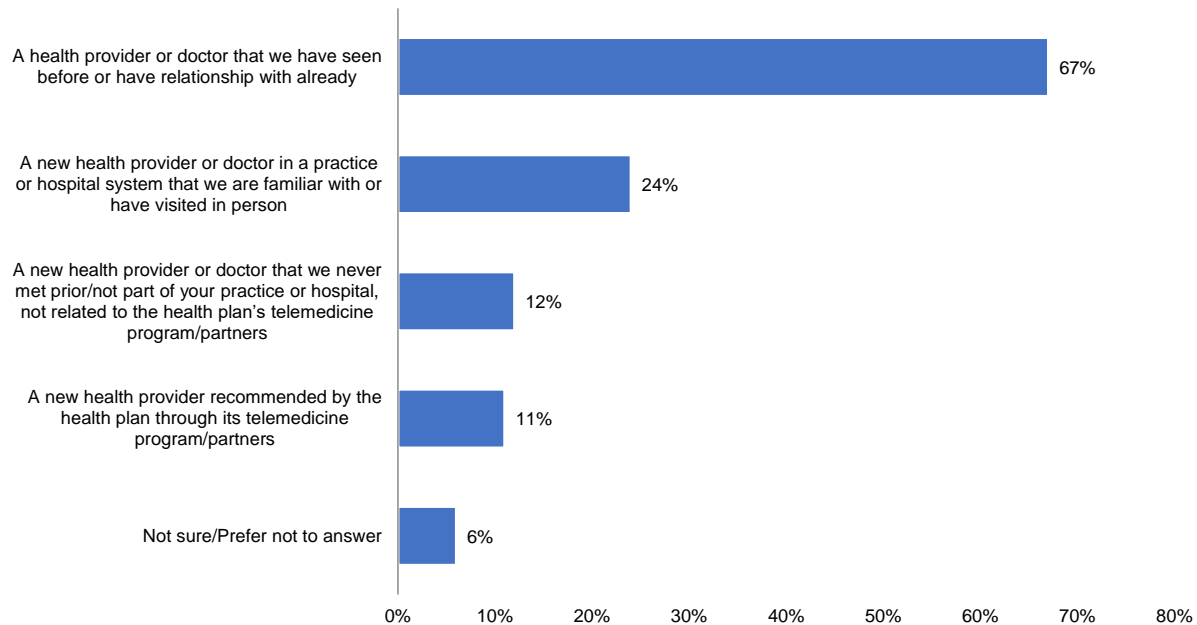
Figure 3
Since the beginning of the year, how many telemedicine visits have you and/or your family had?



Source: EBRI/Greenwald Research Consumer Engagement in Health Care Survey, 2020.

Telemedicine visits generally occurred with known providers outside of a telemedicine program. Two-thirds (67 percent) of adults reported that the telemedicine visit was with a health provider or doctor that they had seen before or had a relationship with already (Figure 4). This is up from 50 percent in 2017. Only 11 percent reported that the visit was with a new health provider recommended by the health plan through its telemedicine program/partners.

Figure 4
Since the beginning of the year, were any of
the visits with one of the following?
 Of those who had at least 1 telemedicine visit since the beginning of the year



Source: EBRI/Greenwald Research Consumer Engagement in Health Care Survey, 2020.

Other findings from the survey:

- 22 percent reported that at least one health care visit was for a mental or emotional health concern or issue.
- 39 percent reported that there was an out-of-pocket payment associated with the telemedicine visit.
- Few people are not confident with various aspects of telemedicine. For example, only 13 percent reported that they were not confident that their personal information was secure during telemedicine visits, and 18 percent were not confident that the doctor would be equally engaged as if they were face-to-face in his/her office. More information about the EBRI/Greenwald Research Consumer Engagement in Health Care Survey can be found [online](#).

The 2020 Consumer Engagement in Health Care Survey is an online survey of 2,411 Americans ages 21–64 with private health insurance coverage. It was fielded in August and September of 2020. The survey is made possible with funding support from the following organizations: Blue Cross Blue Shield Association, Conduent HR, HealthEquity, National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, Prudential Financial, Segal, TIAA, UMB Financial, and Voya Financial.

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