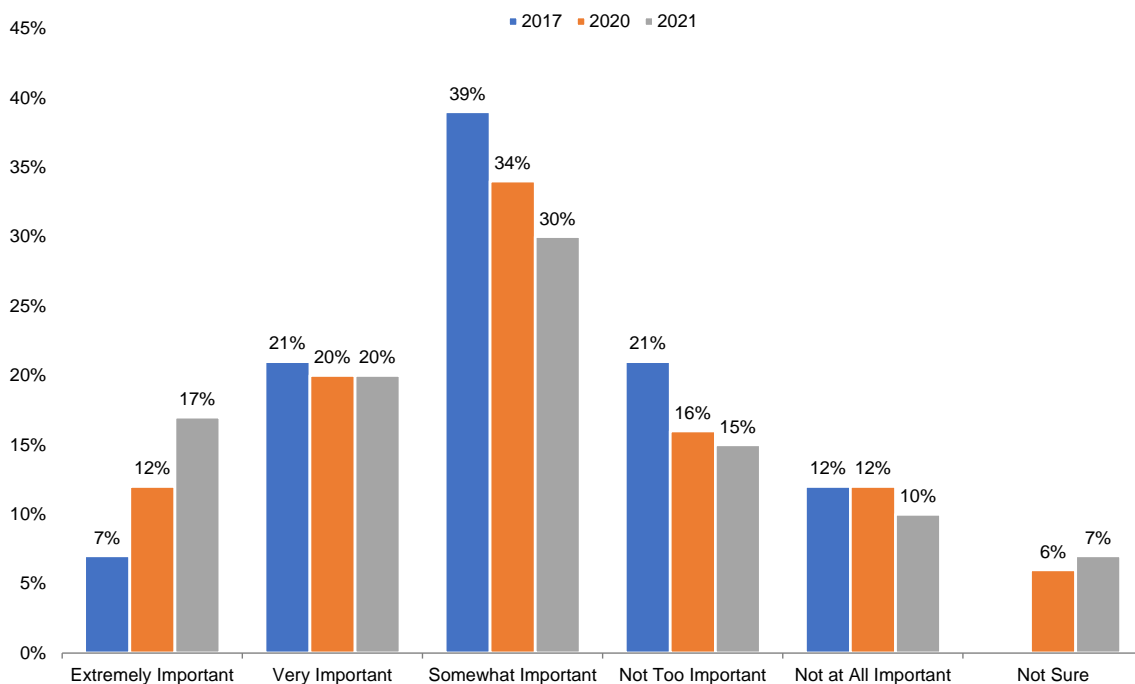


## Telemedicine Importance Increased During the COVID-19 Pandemic

The percentage of adults with private health insurance reporting that telemedicine was an extremely important option for getting medical care more than doubled between 2017 and 2021, according to results from the Employee Benefit Research Institute (EBRI) and Greenwald Research's Consumer Engagement in Health Care Survey.

In 2021, 17 percent of adults reported that a telemedicine option was extremely important, up from 7 percent in 2017 (Figure 1). Overall, however, those reporting that telemedicine was important to any degree remained steady between 2017 and 2020, with fewer reporting it was somewhat important in 2021 vs. 2017.

Figure 1  
How Do You Rate the Importance of Having Telemedicine as an Option for Getting Medical Care in Certain Situations?

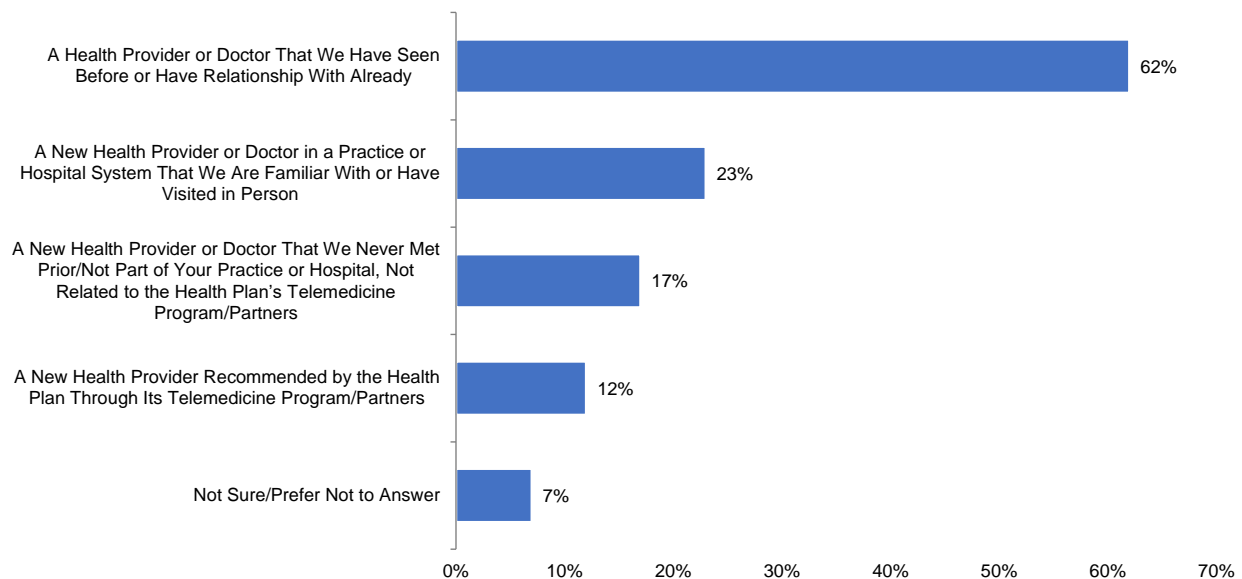


Source: EBRI/Greenwald Research Consumer Engagement in Health Care Survey, 2017, 2020–2021.

Telemedicine visits generally occurred with known providers outside of a telemedicine program. Nearly two-thirds (62 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 2). This is up from 50 percent in 2017. Only 12 percent reported that the visit was with a new health provider recommended by the health plan through its telemedicine program/partners.

**Figure 2**  
**Thinking of the Time Period Since January 1, 2021, Were Any of the**  
**Visits With One of the Following?**

Had at Least 1 Telemedicine Visit Since the Beginning of the Year



Source: EBRI/Greenwald Research Consumer Engagement in Health Care Survey, 2021.

Other findings from the survey:

- Satisfaction with the quality of telemedicine visits is good. Three-quarters were either very satisfied (35 percent) or somewhat satisfied (42 percent).
- High-deductible health plan enrollees are more likely than traditional health plan enrollees to report that they are very likely to use telemedicine in the future.

It remains to be seen how important the role of telemedicine will be in a post-pandemic world. Similarly, more research is needed on the impact of telemedicine on patients' health status, the downstream impact on in-person health care sought, and the spending and price differences in telemedicine services relative to in-person services. EBRI will continue to leverage surveys as well as empirical data to answer these questions.

More information about the EBRI/Greenwald Research Consumer Engagement in Health Care Survey can be found [online](#).

The 2021 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, Carefirst, HealthEquity, Prudential Financial, Segal, TIAA, UMB Financial, and Voya Financial.

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