

# Pandemic Increases Americans' Appetite for Healthcare Evolution

As part of a series to understand the effects of COVID-19 on people, businesses and institutions, APCO Worldwide conducted a poll of Americans from March 26–27, 2020. In the latest polling, APCO, a global advisory and advocacy communications firm, explored how COVID-19 is impacting Americans' attitudes and behaviors related to healthcare.

This report focuses on changing behaviors related to healthcare delivery.

**Americans expect healthcare delivery to change as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, with new emphasis on telehealth and out-of-office provider services. But, while the healthcare system is focusing on COVID-19 patients, there are signs Americans' use of routine and chronic care services is diminishing.**

- 87% of Americans think it is likely that **more healthcare services will be available remotely or virtually in 2021** as a result of the pandemic, and, in the next three months, 58% say they are more likely to use those services.
- Whether it be for coronavirus or some other medical need, **75% would be very or somewhat interested in using remote or virtual health care services**; 10% would not be interested at all.
- And, in the next three months, 52% of Americans also think it is likely they will use a **drive-through medical testing facility** and 45% say it is likely they will **buy medicines online**.
- Yet, only half say they will refill prescriptions for chronic condition medications (51%) and less than half will visit their doctors in-person (40%) or a hospital for non-life-threatening needs (32%), which points to **potential decline in near-term chronic and or non-COVID-19 acute medical care**.

**While there is a great deal of interest in telehealth options, distrust lingers about the quality of care and protection of health data. The expected rise in use of telehealth options are rooted in views that in-person medical care will be either too risky or inaccessible due to the pandemic's demands on the system.**

- Though a plurality of Americans (38%) say that nothing prevents them from using telehealth services, about **one-in-five are concerned that they won't get good medical advice without being in-person** (22%), or that they don't know how to do it (18%) or their provider does not offer this service (18%).
- Half (49%) of Americans are more concerned (19% much, 30% somewhat more) that because of the increased use of telehealth **the privacy of their health data is more at risk**. Yet, that is paired with an almost equal rate who say increased telehealth does not change their concern about data privacy (44%).
- **Shortages in the next three years are expected in Americans' own areas across the healthcare needs**, including personal protective equipment (79% likely), diagnostic tests (75%) and essential medical equipment, like respirators (74%). Shortages of healthcare providers are expected, as well, according to 67% of Americans.
- Similarly, as Americans look ahead to 2021, 68% believe shortages are likely of **mental health providers to address consequences of social distancing**.