



COVID-19 PATIENT PRIMARY CARE SURVEY

SERIES 1 FIELDLED MAY 4-11, 2020



Patients value having a relationship with their doctor and a large majority would feel distress at practice closures, perhaps contributing to their fears about “opening the country”.

- 83% of patients would feel distress at the loss of a relationship with their doctor
- 17% would feel panicked, 17% would be heartbroken, and 37% would feel the loss of someone they trust
- Half of patients felt certain the country should remain closed; only 22% agreed it should open; 28% were either unsure or felt certain conditions (capacity for testing, contact tracing, reduced infection rates) must be met

Patients care about who their primary care clinicians are and greatly favor connection

- 72% have a usual source of care and a doctor they can trust
- 63% find it important that their doctor knows them as a person; additional 21% would prefer being known
- 57% feel connected to their doctor, feel safe asking the doctor anything (61%), feel the doctor helps them make sense of what’s going on with them (66%), and that simply seeing the doctor makes them feel better (54%)

2/3 of patients have been in contact with primary care over the past 8 weeks, averaging 1.6 contacts per patient.

- 73% of patient reported contact with their practice resulted from practice outreach to check on patients
- Modes of contact between care team and patients varied greatly: 58% were phone contacts, 21% were video based visits, 18% were based in secure messaging and patient portals, with 21% happening in person.

Digital platforms can aid access, but for many they create obstacles. Nearly 7 in 10 patients prefer in-person care

- 29% do not have the broadband access required to support most digital health care platforms
- 28% do not have tablets or computers at home able to support digital health care
- 26% felt they lacked data plans sufficient to accommodate use of digital health
- One third were not comfortable with digital care (18% video; 12% phone) and another 25% were unsure of their level of comfort. 8% had started a video-based visit that was converted to phone after the video didn’t work
- 12% were not comfortable with phone-based visits and 12% were unsure how they felt

Patient reported reasons for contacting, or avoiding, primary care raise important concerns. Over the last 8 weeks:

- 35% are OVERDUE for wellness visits, 32% overdue for preventive care, 19% overdue for chronic care visits
- 23% were sick or injured but actively avoiding medical care; 42% will delay care until they have a serious concern
- 41% HAD wellness visits, 23% chronic care visits, 12% related to COVID-19, 19% were for acute concerns
- 52% have had trouble with feelings of isolation/loneliness; 48% with anxiety/depression; 17% with addiction

Asked to rank order 6 common primary care settings, 72% identified traditional primary care practice as first choice

- 9% of respondents chose walk-in/urgent care as their first choice, a distance second to traditional settings
- Settings in rank order were: traditional primary care practice, walk-in/urgent care clinic, concierge or member-based practice, retail-based clinic, online only doctor platform, clinic based on site at the office.

Methods – This survey fielded by The Larry A. Green Center, in partnership with the Primary Care Collaborative and 3rd Conversation. The survey was offered through public posting on a survey website and open to people 18 or older until a minimum threshold of 2200 responses was reached. This is a convenience sample, voluntary and anonymous, with enrollment becoming limited as it filled to ensure diversity in respondent demographics. Fielded May 4-11, 2020.

Sample – 2,250 respondents of diverse education (34% high school degree, 47% college degree, 15% graduate degree), income (44% less than \$50,000 household income, 7% greater than \$150,000 household income), and geographies (30% urban and 21% rural). One third were 18-35 years old, one third were over 50. Level of health varied with 36% rating their health as very good and 30% saying good. 46% were male, 52% female; 42% were full time employed and 14% were part time employed. 20% lost employment during the pandemic. Telehealth capacity and ranking of primary care setting questions fielded among subsample of 1,111; opening of country question fielded among subsample of 1,139.

Open text comments from patients regarding...

... reasons they have delayed care

- My boyfriend is experiencing chest pains and is fatigued but cannot get a doctor's appointment.
- Unless it's an emergency, I feel visiting a doctor would take away time/resources from other people right now.
- I have a blood infection but will not see my doctor because I'll be admitted for IV antibiotics. After 2 weeks I'll be moved to a nursing home and I'm afraid of catching COVID-19.
- I need to go for my heart but I'm scared of extra contact because I have to go back to work and I have 3 out of 5 kids at home have asthma induced from illness usually respiratory (flu & colds).
- I do not want to burden the healthcare system, specifically my primary care provider with anything less than serious. They have enough to worry about and I'm doing my part delaying because they think it's best for their PCP.

... the beneficial impact they feel from being known by their primary care doctor

- I am very happy that my Doctor has a personal relationship with me, knows about my life, my current issues (non-medical), and cares about how I am doing.
- I go to a clinic that specializes in people over 65 years old. I was very touched when my health coach called me just to see how I was doing during the pandemic.
- My care is completely through the VA. And the VA has gone the extra mile to see to it that I have a phone conference with my primary care doctor, and that during my urology consultation, they run a blood screen and send the results to my primary care. Great job by the VA!
- I greatly appreciated my doc proactively sending out an email to all his patients at the beginning and twice since letting us know the concerns with our specific chronic illness and what we need to do to protect ourselves. This has a lot to do with why I trust him so much.

... mental stress related to the pandemic

- It just concerns me about our leaders asking us to do things that they would not and do not do themselves, i.e., wearing masks
- It was extremely difficult to get tested when I was running a fever and my doctor wanted me tested. It took 2 weeks and 3 attempts to finally get tested so I never found out if I actually had it.
- I don't like all the misinformation on regular news. I don't feel like I can trust the numbers.
- I don't feel President Trump has provided adequate leadership during the crisis. I think we are opening too soon. I feel there should be more federal government stimulus assistance money.
- There should be more accommodations in place for the Deaf. I can't speech read when faces are covered.
- Not being able to socialize/gather with my friends for games and activities. So desolate.
- Other than 99% of the time I sit in a 12x12 room, 23 hours a day ... everything is normal.
- Terrible anxiety.

... how they feel about the country opening up

- I don't truly feel anything is ever going to be the same. At least a year before we should begin trying to open up anything at all.
- I believe it is too soon. It seems the illness rates are going up in communities that have partially opened. I am not comfortable going into a business at this time, although I would love to have a haircut and pedicure but my health is more important.
- If everyone would use a face cover and keep a safe social distance, opening the country would be okay.
- Some states could [open now], but others need more time.
- [The country should] not open. The numbers of newly infected need to settle and show signs of decreasing, with other protective measures in place, research and mode of attack needs to be in place.
- Certain areas yes. The bigger cities with more cases no. They should stay closed.
- Only if actual non-political science is used to determine safety and social distancing is used.
- I believe to an extent the country needs to be opened up. But, there are things and places that should have regulations to be open. The fact that Walmart is open but places like the mall are not is just ridiculous. Bigger franchises such as Walmart, Kmart, Walgreens are open and are more than likely going to have people with less open space in between them than other places.
- Should be done very soon, but carefully, with specific suggested guidelines.
- It depends what part of the country that you are talking about. Different parts of the country can be opened up in phases now.
- I think businesses need to reopen to keep the economy functioning, but the public should continue to practice distancing, face masks, hygiene, etc.
- It's a necessity, but will lead to more COVID and possibly more closure.
- People need to start making money again.