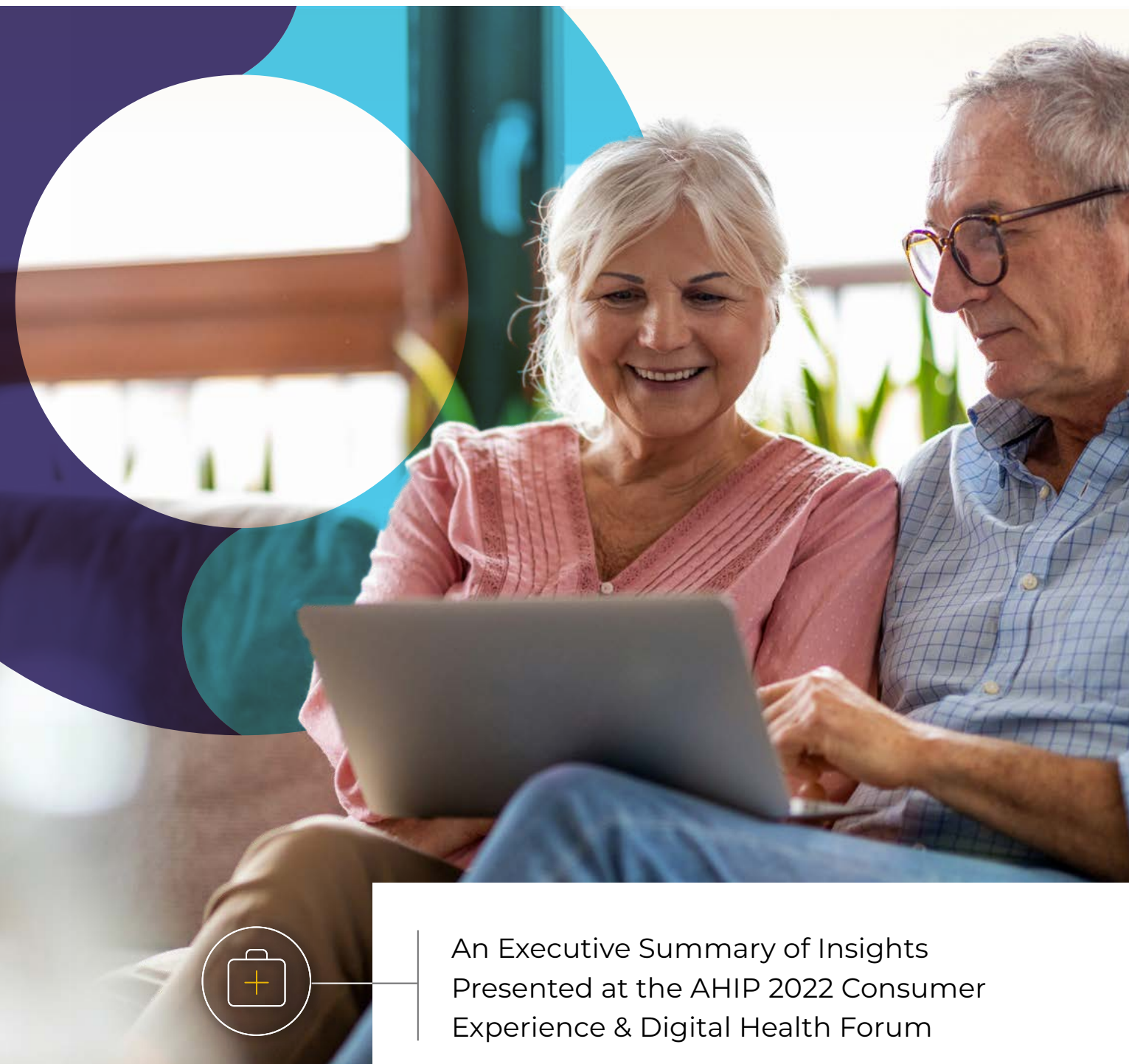


How virtual care can improve treatment for members with multiple chronic conditions



An Executive Summary of Insights
Presented at the AHIP 2022 Consumer
Experience & Digital Health Forum



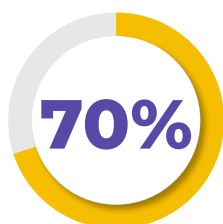
Many US adults are living with the unique challenges of **chronic conditions**.



have one chronic condition.



have two or more.¹



of people with three or more find it **extremely challenging to get high-quality care**.²

Many US adults are living with the unique challenges of chronic conditions – 60% have one chronic condition, and 40% have two or more.¹ They require more medications and more health care visits than people without chronic conditions but often don't receive the level of care they need.

Teladoc Health recently conducted a study on members living with chronic conditions and found that 70% of people with three or more find it extremely challenging to get high-quality care.² “That figure is twice as high as for members without chronic conditions,” Hunter Sinclair, Vice President of Solution Strategy for Teladoc Health, said during the 2022 AHIP Consumer Experience & Digital Health Forum.

Michael Kobernick, MD, senior Medical Director for Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, agreed that health care today doesn't adequately reflect the needs of the patient, although innovations are helping. “Illness has gotten to be too complex for one individual physician to manage,” which has led to new approaches, including telehealth, Dr. Kobernick said.

Dr. Kobernick expects to see “a new kind of health care” emerge, involving a “team approach to chronic disease where we use virtual care as an integral tool.” A physician will act as a care guide, evaluating treatments, and as part of a team caring for people with complex conditions.

Meanwhile, technology in the home is becoming more of a consumer product — a trend Dr. Kobernick expects to expand. “We're beginning to see screening, nonemergent urgent care, preventive services and well-being in the consumer space.”

It is also essential to incorporate mental health into every conversation with members who have chronic conditions. Every treatment decision should be considered in the context of how the person is coping with their illness.

The emotional journey

The Teladoc Health study also found that 45% of members with chronic conditions say they are struggling with mental health issues, and 48% said these were either a result of, or had been negatively affected by, their chronic condition(s).²

“Everyone I know with multiple chronic conditions is unhappy, depressed and worried and has a whole range of feelings, so we have to build that into the care model,” Dr. Kobernick said.



of members with chronic conditions say they are struggling with **mental health issues**.



Teladoc Health is willing to partner with us to achieve a new vision of how to provide healthcare with whole-person virtual chronic disease management. We've collaborated to develop outcome metrics demonstrating the value of their product.

Michael Kobernick, MD,
Senior Medical Director,
Blue Cross Blue Shield
of Michigan

In fact, internal Teladoc Health data shows that enrolling in a mental health program is the biggest contributor to improvements after one year among patients with diabetes, hypertension or prediabetes.

When mental health is included in the Teladoc Health's chronic condition management program, patients who use the service see a 0.5% average additional reduction in A1C, a 9.6 mmHg average additional reduction in systolic blood pressure and 1.5% average additional weight loss.

Closing care gaps

Greater use of telehealth and increased focus on the mental health component of chronic conditions can also help close care gaps. After six months in the Teladoc Health chronic condition management program, all ethnic groups had reached a more level playing field, said Glen Davis, MD, Vice President of Clinical Programs at Teladoc Health.

Dr. Kobernick pointed out that some ethnic groups are at higher risk for certain health complications and that people in specific ZIP codes have less access to education and nutritious food than others. It's crucial to identify those members and reach out to them, but this is complicated by the fact that "30% to 40% of our members have no primary care physician" and are not getting screened for the conditions they are at higher risk of developing.

"Health plans need to make it easier for members to get screened and to steer them to appropriate care if they screen positive," said Dr. Kobernick, noting that screening should become more of a consumer product.

Dr. Davis added that "Teladoc Health aims to address this by looking at how to help members when they are not with physicians." This includes providing biometric devices, blood pressure cuffs, digital coaching, mental health care and remote care with a virtual primary care provider.

Working with a partner

"When beginning to offer more digital and remote care tools, plans can work with a partner to avoid care fragmentation and help members with navigation," Sinclair said.

For example, Teladoc Health offers:



Connected devices that monitor members, collect data and provide real-time feedback.



Personalized health signals for timely, actionable feedback to guide members to healthier behaviors, including lessons and curriculum, health nudges and action plans.



Expert coaching with dedicated credentialed coaches following evidence-based standards of care.



Provider-based care using treatment plans co-created with a Teladoc Health physician and provided in coordination with members' primary care providers and care team that drive outcomes.



Integrated mental health care, with online therapists, psychologists and psychiatrists available seven days a week.

“Emerging technologies and services should also be used to create better relationships with members, such as allowing members to get consistent support from the same person when they have questions,” Dr. Kobernick advised. “There’s a tendency with technology to forget there’s a person attached to it. A key point is to personalize it, and I believe it can be done in a cost-effective, scalable way so people feel like they have their place they can go where somebody that knows them answers their questions.”

Dr. Davis agrees that services must be hyperpersonalized for each member, providing the care that they need on the spot, when they need it, to break down the barriers to accessing health care. Many people with chronic conditions face significant challenges receiving the treatment they need, but virtual care can help break down barriers, address mental health and make care accessible and affordable. With telehealth, it is now possible to achieve the convenient, high-quality care that all members deserve.

¹ Chronic diseases in America. CDC. May 6, 2022. <https://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/resources/infographic/chronic-diseases.htm>

² Teladoc internal study