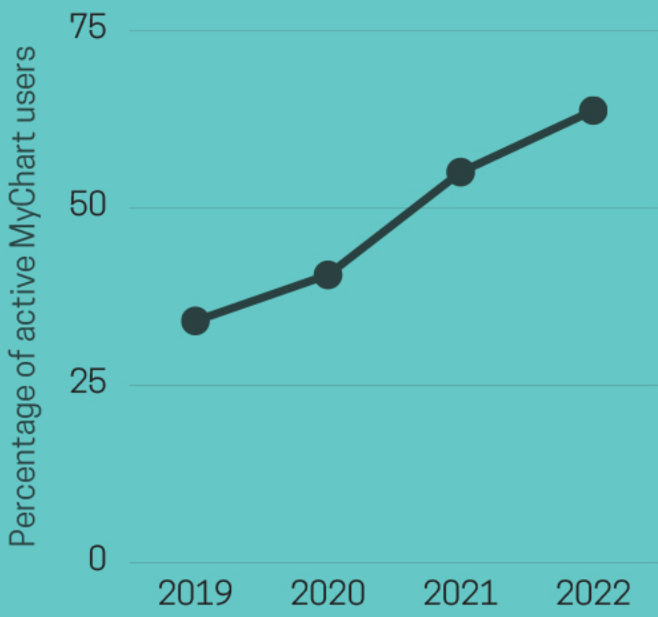


THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

Implications for Improving Access to Care

Telehealth has been touted as a revolutionary tool that breaks down barriers to access to health care, particularly in rural areas. However, telehealth's applicability may be limited for certain populations. While broadband access remains a known barrier, other important factors influence a person's ability or preference to engage with telehealth. Bassett Research Institute conducted a survey, interviews, and analysis of Epic data to learn more about these factors and whether they impact access to care in the Bassett Healthcare Network.



IMPACT OF COVID-19: PATIENT PORTAL USE

With the COVID-19 pandemic came changes to the digital landscape of healthcare. The overall proportion of patients who were active users of their patient portal, meaning that the patient had used the portal in the previous year, increased from 34% in January of 2019 to 64% in January of 2022.

WHO USES TELEHEALTH?



Patients who were younger, with more education, married/partnered or enrolled in Medicaid were more likely than others to report using VIDEO telehealth. Patients with a disability were more likely to report using AUDIO-ONLY telehealth. Patients who were younger, had more education or were married/partnered were more likely to report being active users of the PATIENT PORTAL.

“

I'm really hesitant to use it... It'd save me time, especially in the winter...but I don't know whether I have to take my own blood pressure... I don't know what all is involved

”



KEY TAKEAWAYS

Community members and clinicians agreed telehealth, when used appropriately, is convenient. Inconsistencies in communicating about telehealth and implementing telehealth processes generate confusion and inhibit adoption.

DIFFERENCES IN ACCESS TO CARE

