Telemedicine: Use, Experience, and Perspectives

Navigating Uncharted Waters in Colorado

COLORADO HEALTH INSTITUTE

May 24, 2022

Emily Johnson
Director of Policy Analysis

COLORADO HEALTH INSTITUTE

We improve the health of all Coloradans through independent research, analysis, and insight that advance sound policies and decisions.

Thank You to Our Sponsors

LEAD SPONSOR

The Colorado Health Foundation™

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

Community First Foundation
Together. Helping Jeffco Thrive

UCLA Center for Health Policy Research

Colorado Department of Health Care Policy & Financing

Colorado Springs Health Foundation

Delta Dental
Delta Dental of Colorado Foundation

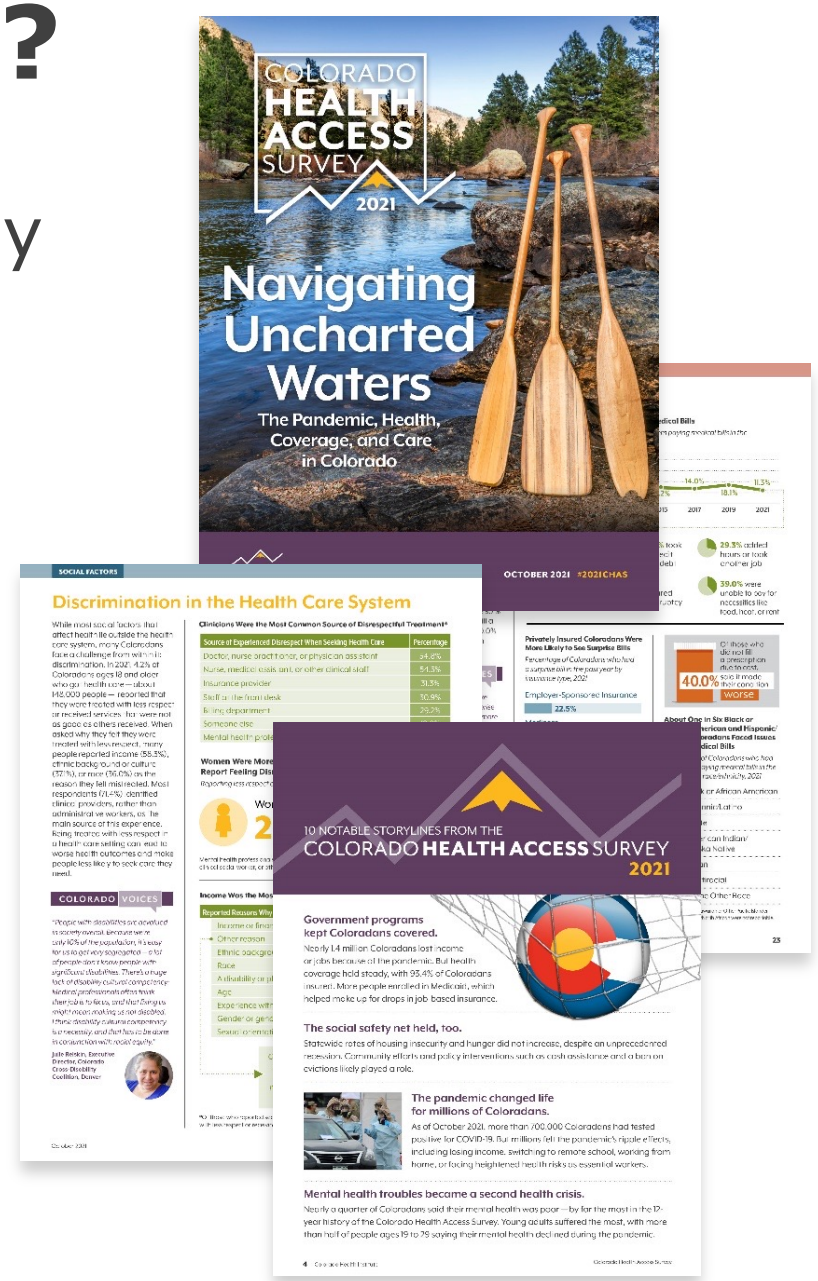
Latino Community Foundation of Colorado

Colorado Office of Behavioral Health
Department of Human Services

Rocky Mountain Health Foundation

What Is the CHAS?

- Colorado Health Access Survey
- 10,000+ Households
- Fielded February – June 2021
- Topics Include
  - Access to Care
  - Insurance
  - Use of Care
  - Affordability
  - Health Status
  - Behavioral Health
  - Social Factors

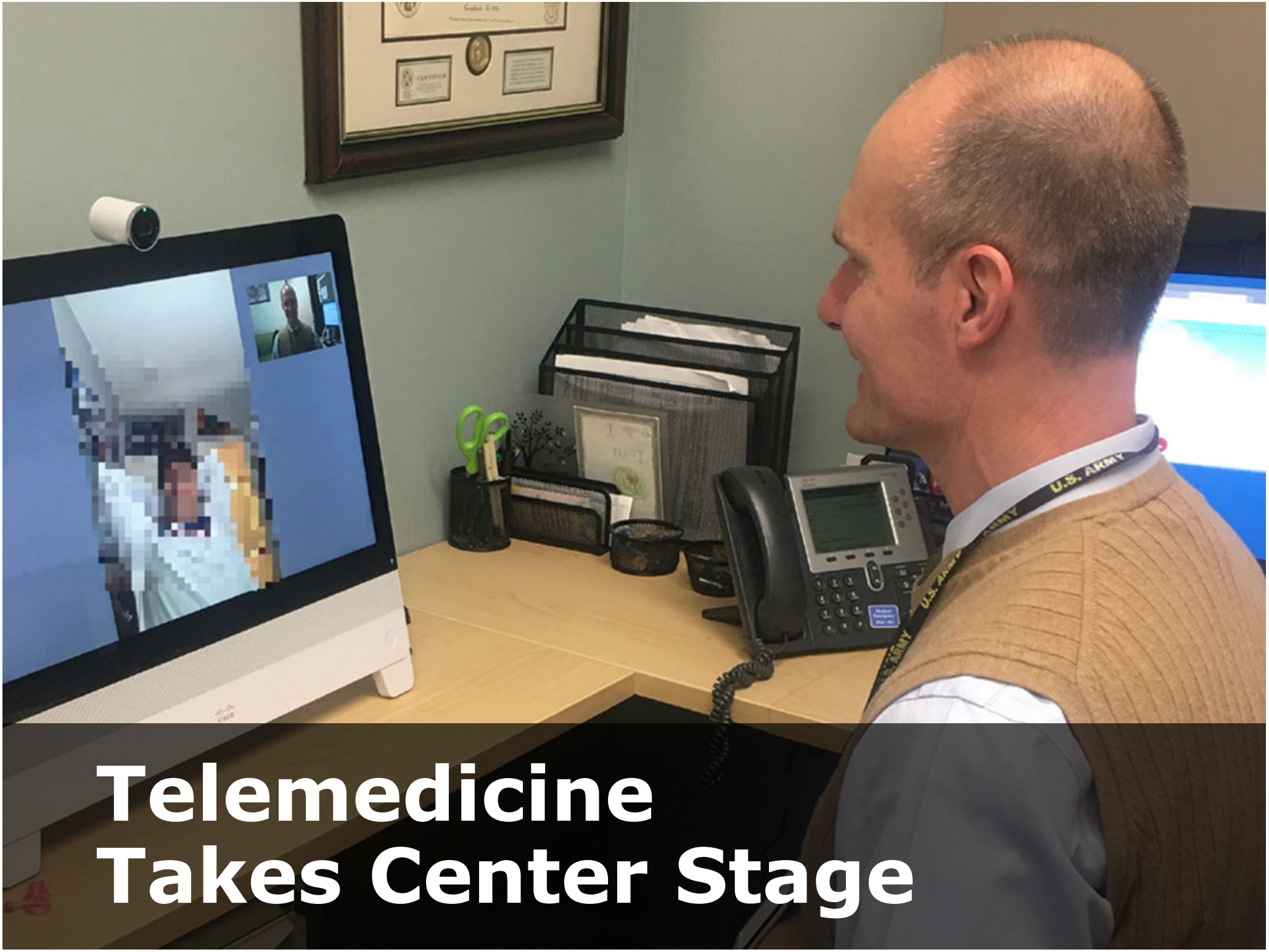


Three Takeaways

1. More than a third of Coloradans used telemedicine in 2021.

2. Most had a positive experience.

3. Many Coloradans worry about telemedicine care quality.



Telemedicine Takes Center Stage

Four Years of Colorado's Telehealth Policy Milestones

This timeline highlights legislative milestones. Many telehealth policy changes can be made through administrative/regulatory action and do not require legislation.

2015

Years in the making, **HB15-1029 established parity between telehealth and in-person care by removing reimbursement restrictions on population size and geographic location.** Previously, reimbursement was limited to telehealth care provided in small, rural counties.

2016

HB16-1047 gave the governor authority to enter into an Interstate Medical Licensure Compact, which enables doctors licensed in other states to obtain expedited licenses to practice medicine in Colorado and other member states. In effect, this expanded the ability of doctors in other states to provide telemedicine services to Coloradans.

2017

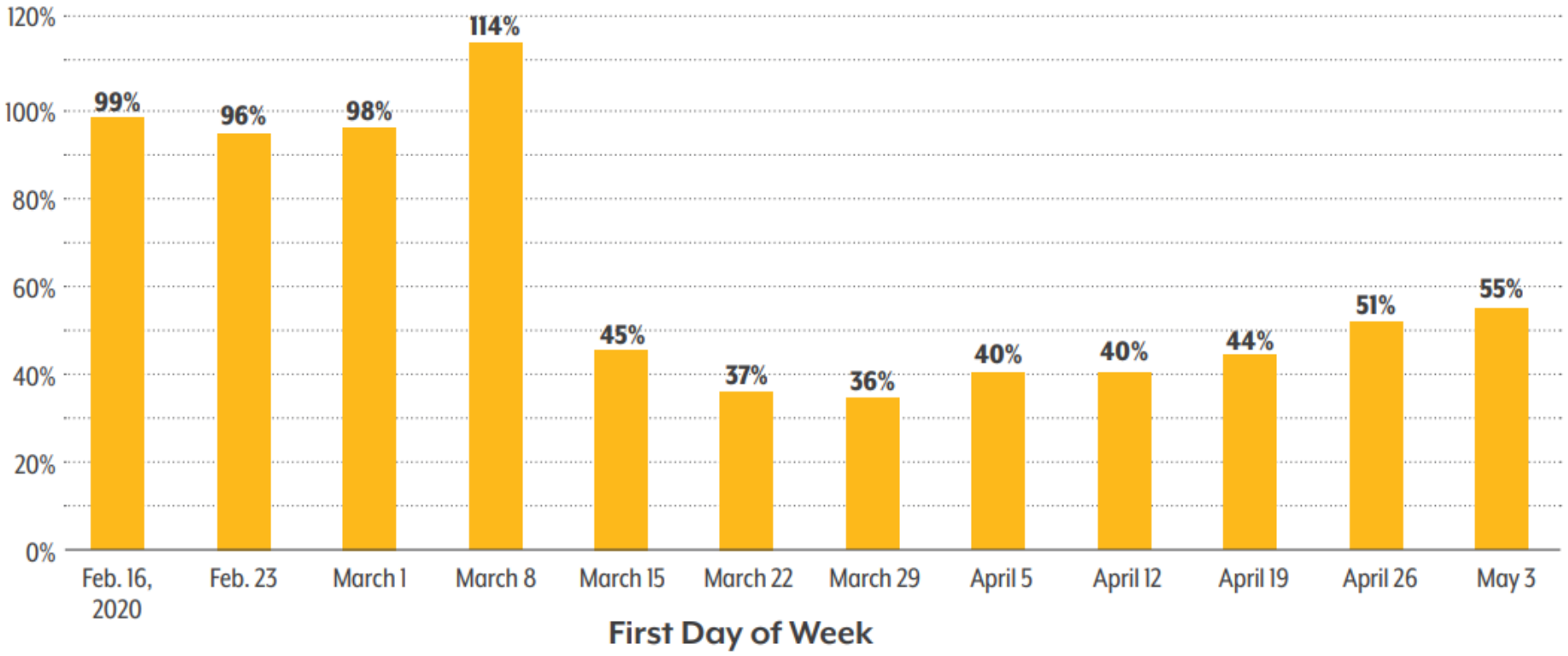
HB17-1094 modified existing requirements for insurers to cover services delivered via telehealth. For example, the bill stated that insurance plans cannot restrict reimbursement based on the type of technology used to deliver telehealth care, as long as it meets other requirements. HB17-1353 authorized the state to continue implementation of the Accountable Care Collaborative (ACC) — Health First Colorado's care delivery system designed to cut costs and improve coordination — and stated that it had to include promotion of telehealth.

2018

SB18-002 reallocated funds to support broadband development across the state, beginning with nearly $19 million available for grants in 2019 and increasing the amount in subsequent years. HB18-1099 took steps to level the playing field for telecommunication companies competing to expand broadband across the state, and SB18-104 sought to bring in more federal funds for rural broadband deployment.

Visit Volume Dropped in 2020

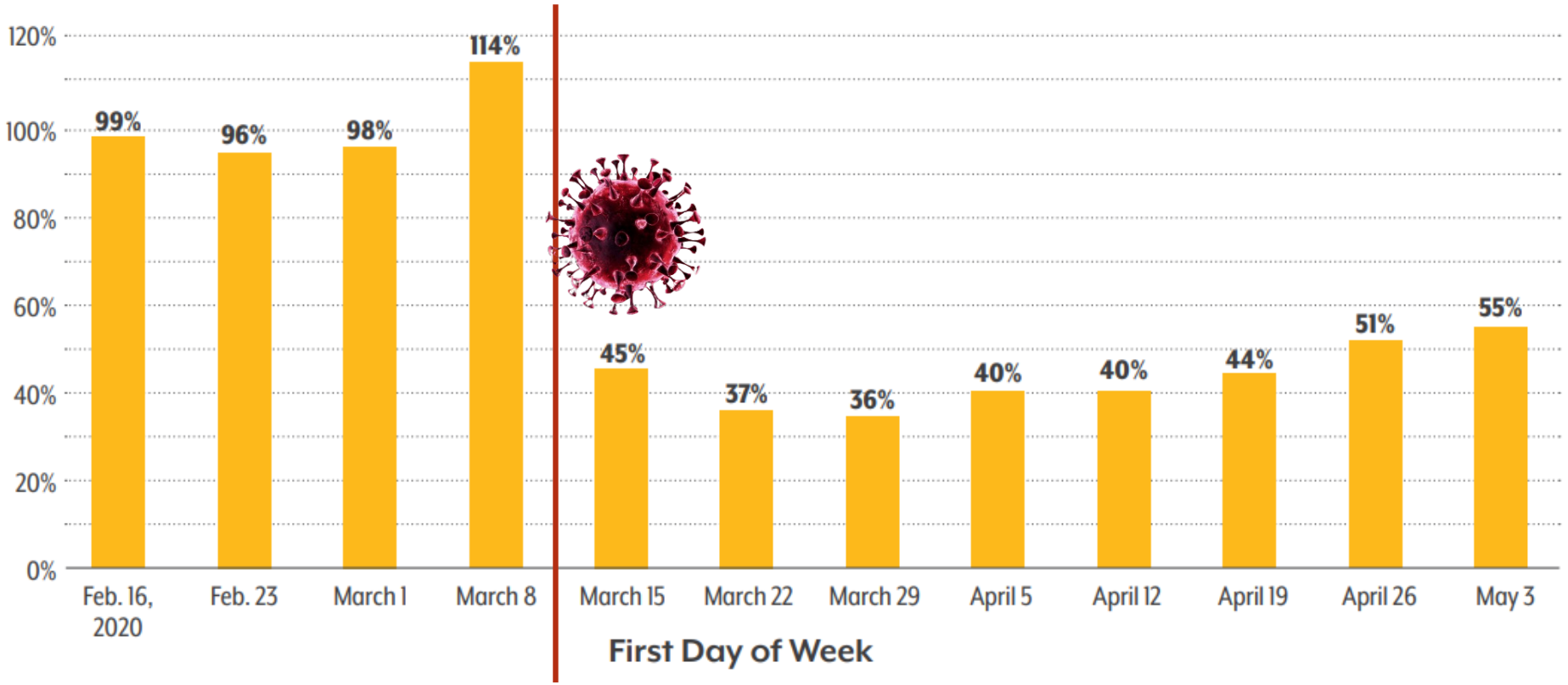
Outpatient Visit Volume by Week Compared to 2019



Source: Colorado Health Observation Regional Database (CHORDS)

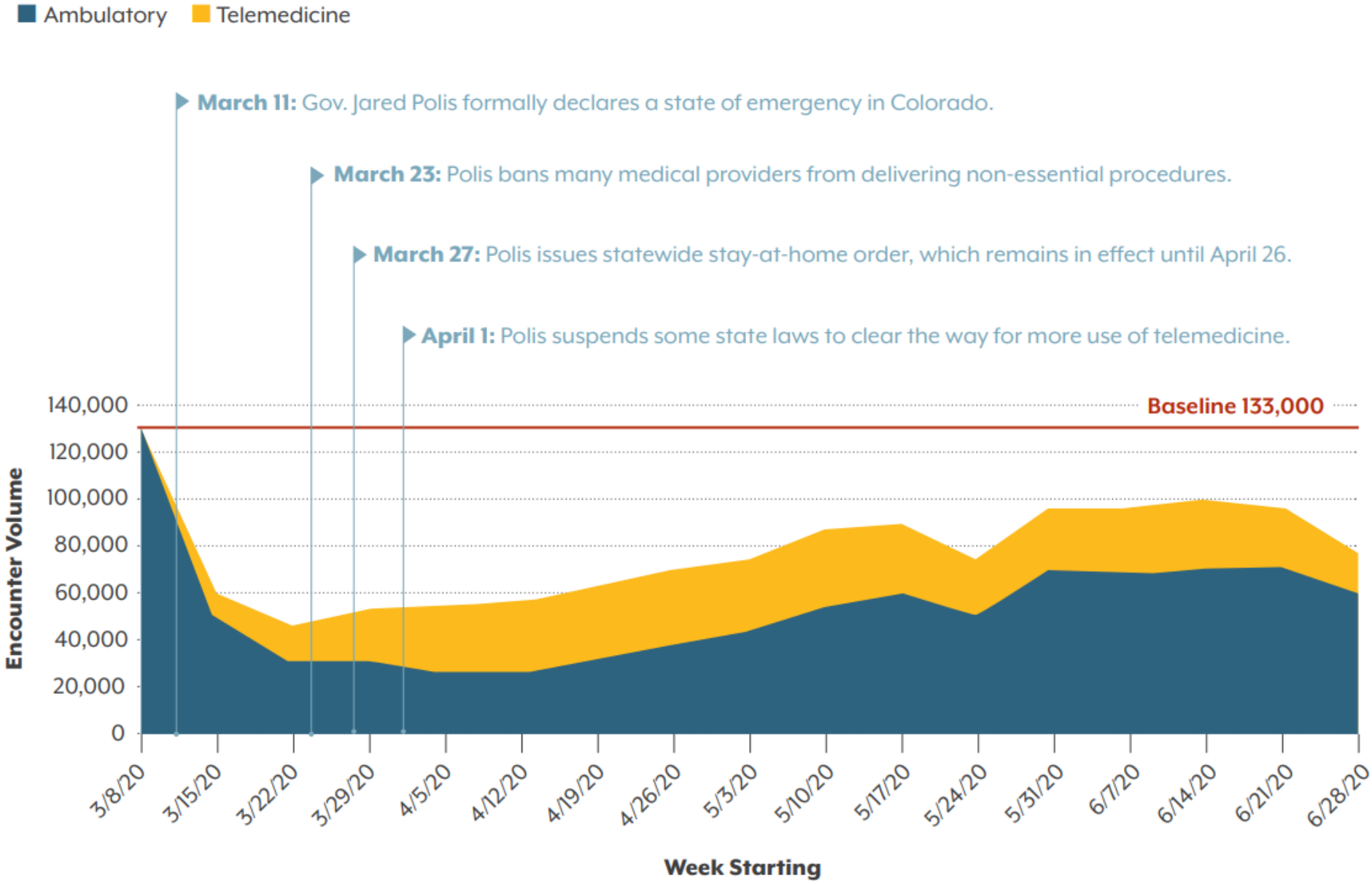
Visit Volume Dropped in 2020

Outpatient Visit Volume by Week Compared to 2019



Source: Colorado Health Observation Regional Database (CHORDS)

Visit Volume Over Time, March 8 Through July 4, 2020



Source: Colorado Health Observation Regional Database (CHORDS)

A Good First Impression

"Prior to COVID, one of our biggest challenges was transportation to appointments. Now we are using more telehealth services. I believe it makes health services more accessible for our community…."

Harry Budisidharta, Executive Director,
Asian Pacific Development Center, Denver

One in Three Coloradans Used Telemedicine in Past Year

Of Those Who Received Telemedicine Services ...

62.9%

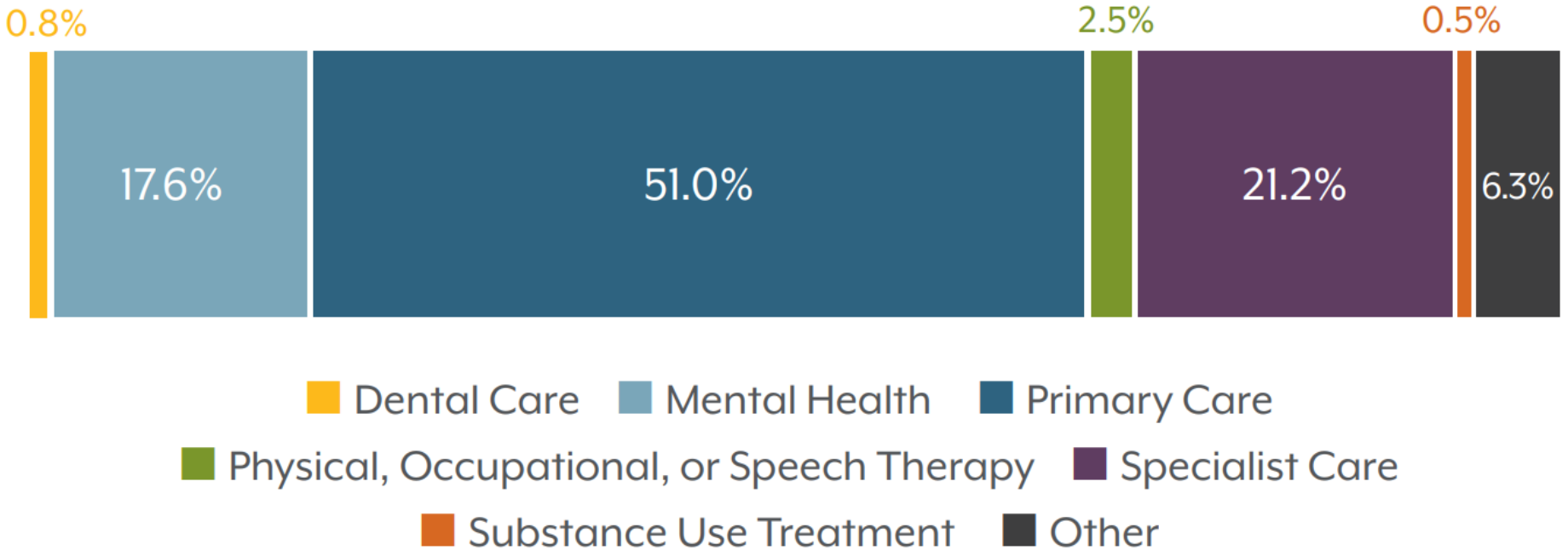
had their most recent visit by video

31.5%

had their most recent visit by phone

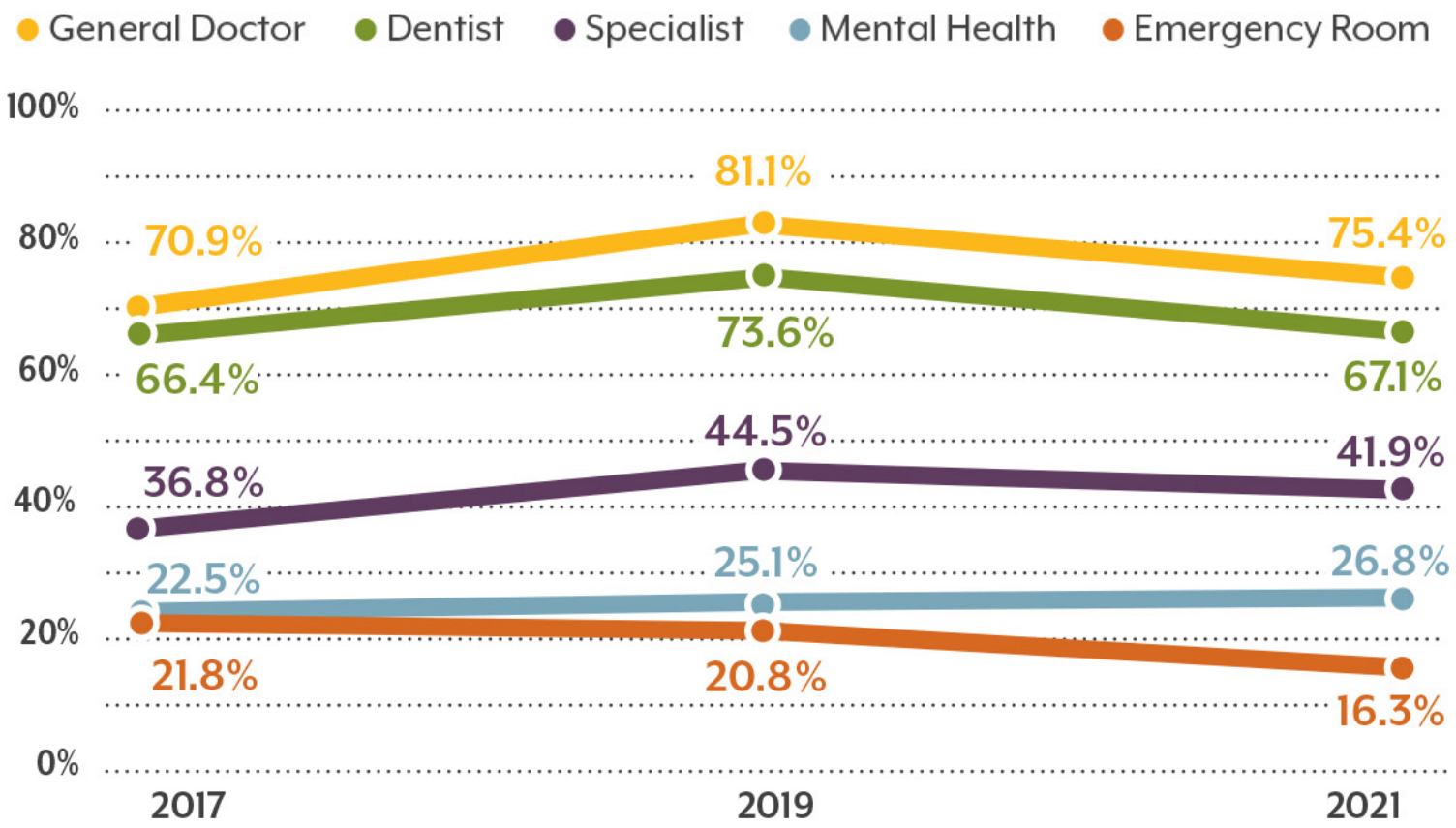
Most Telemedicine Visits Were for Primary Care

Type of care received during most recent telemedicine visit, 2021



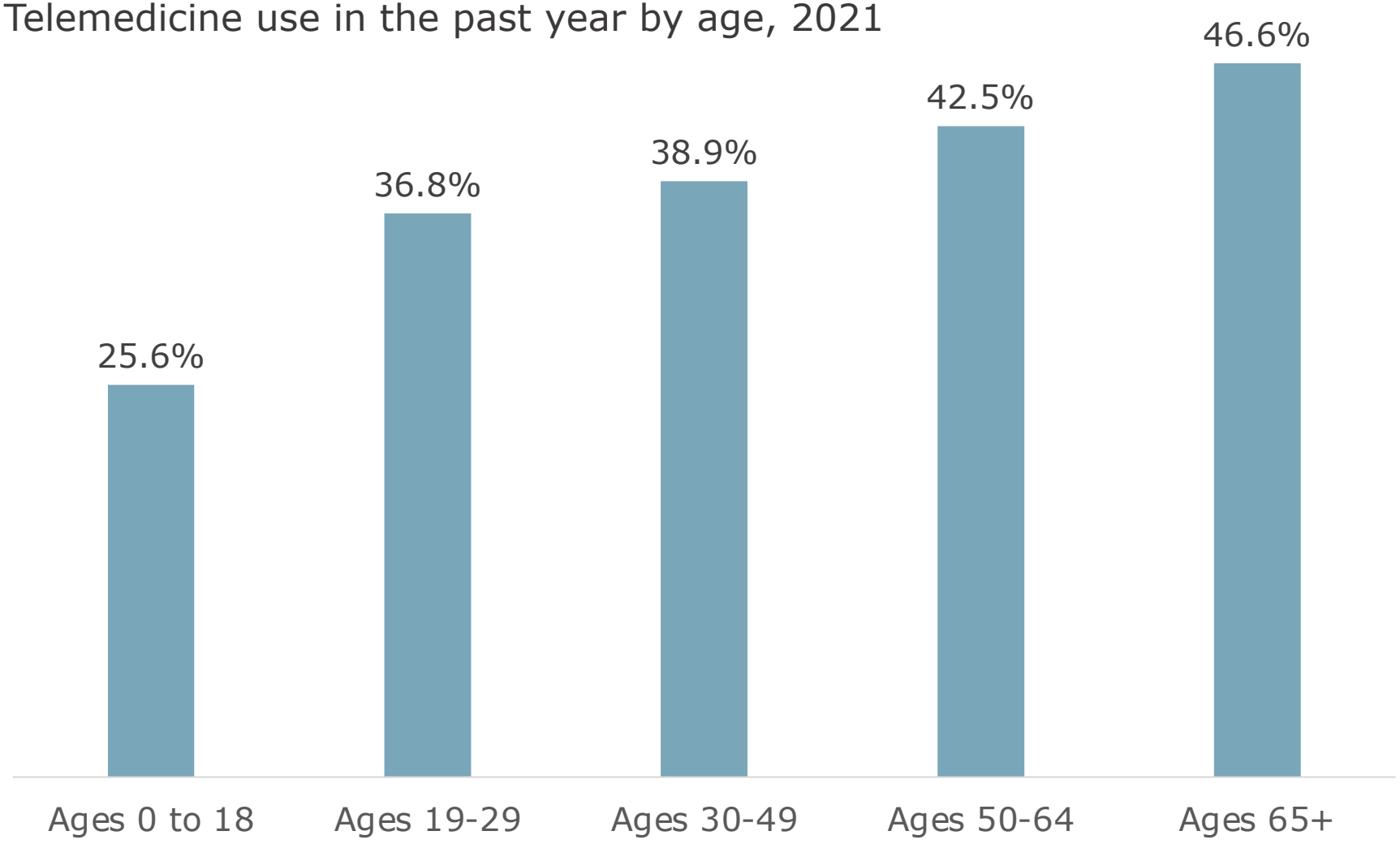
While Use of Most Health Care Declined, Use of Mental Health Care Increased

Visit in past 12 months by visit type, 2017-2021



Older Coloradans Are Most Likely to Use Telemedicine …

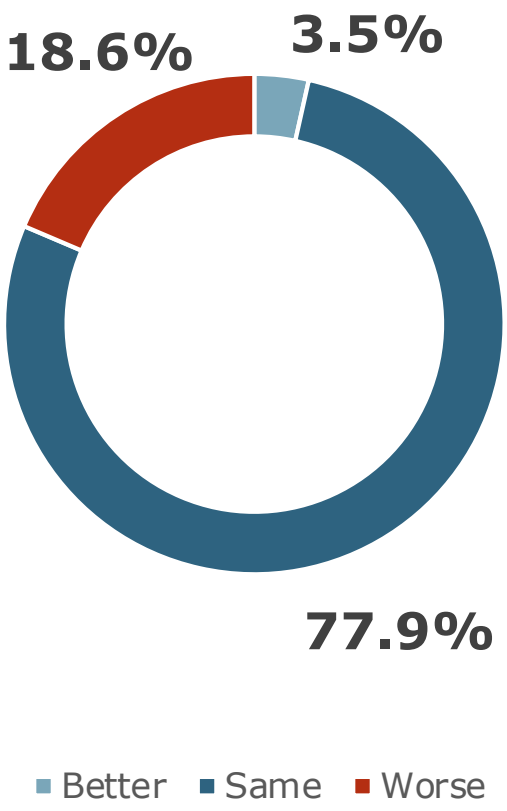
Telemedicine use in the past year by age, 2021



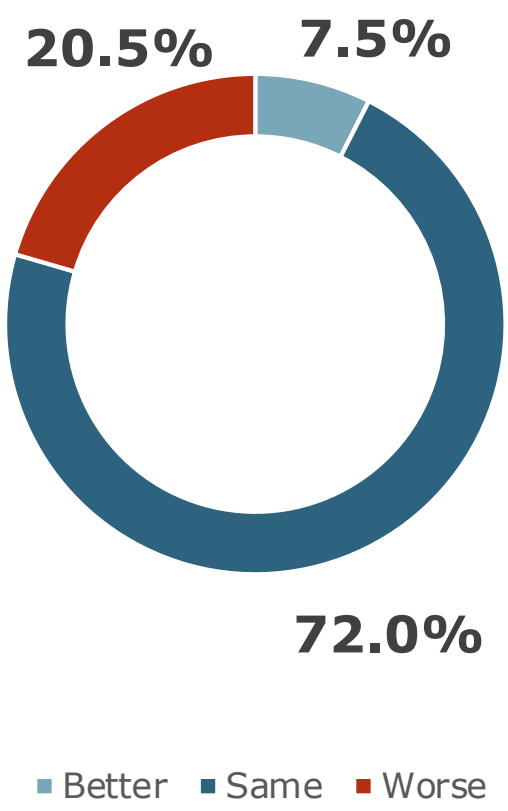
… And They Say the Quality is Good

Telemedicine quality vs in-person care by age, 2021

All Coloradans

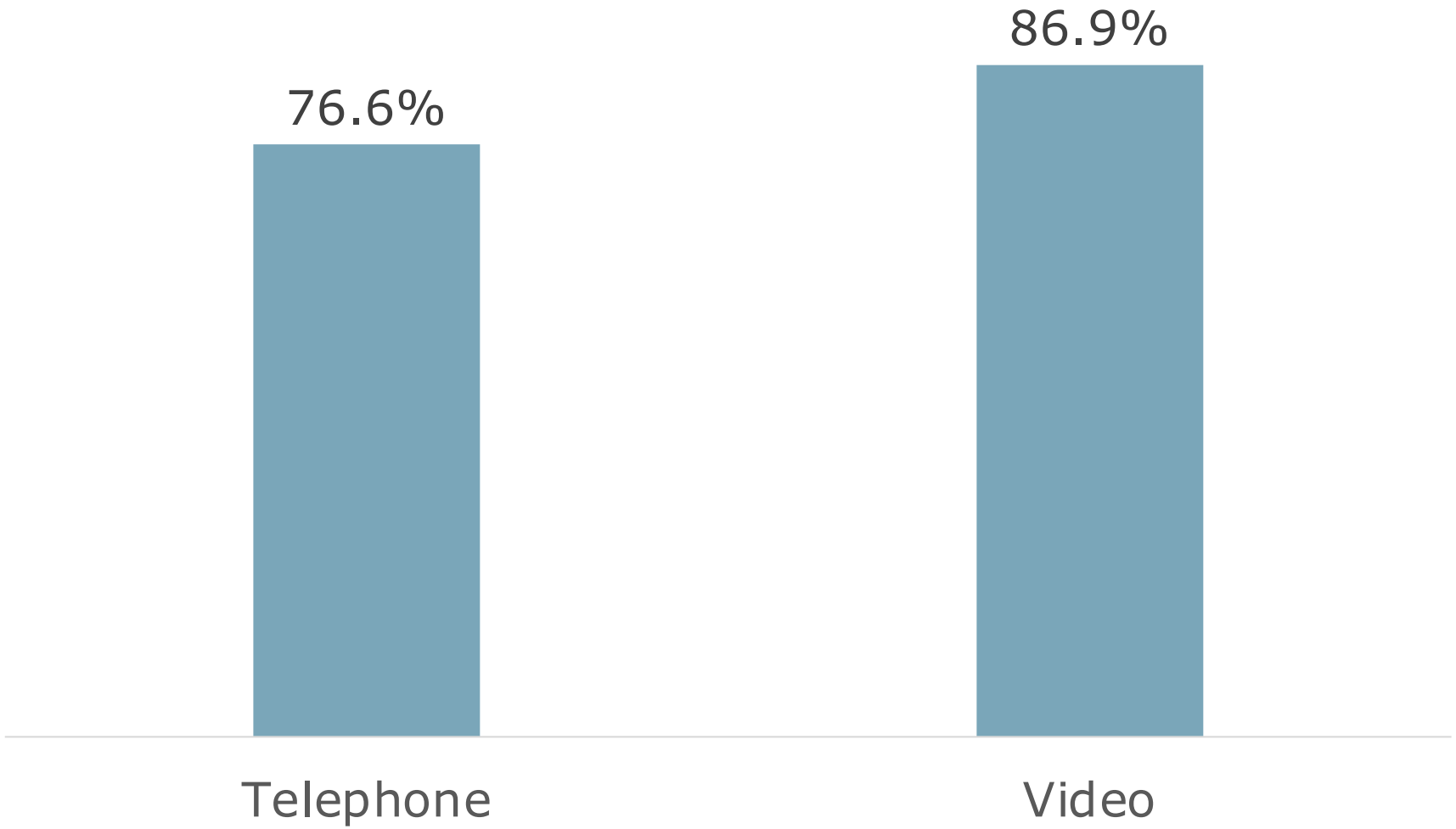


Ages 65+



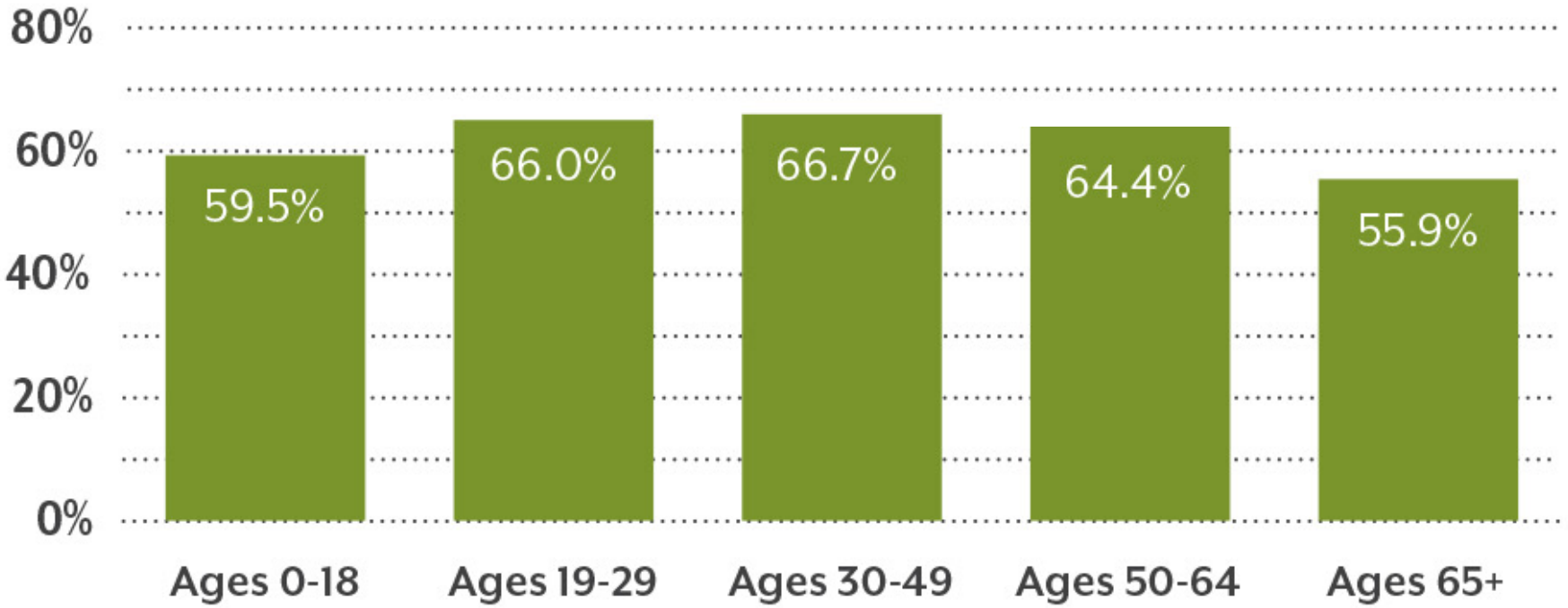
Video Quality Is Rated Higher

Telemedicine ranked better or same as in-person care by modality, ages 65+, 2021

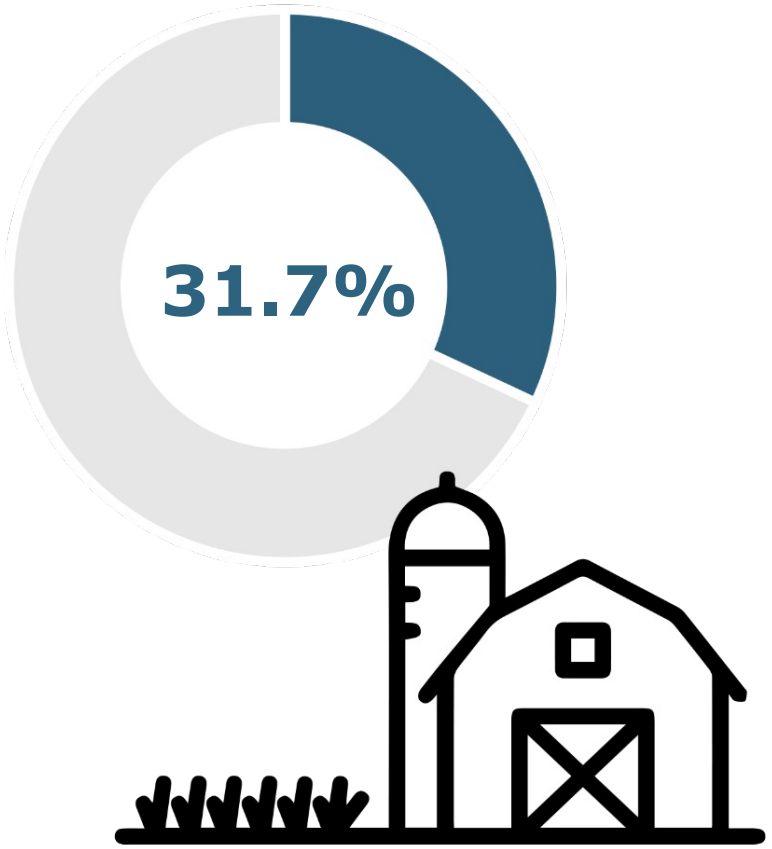


Most People in All Age Groups Said They Are Likely to Use Telemedicine

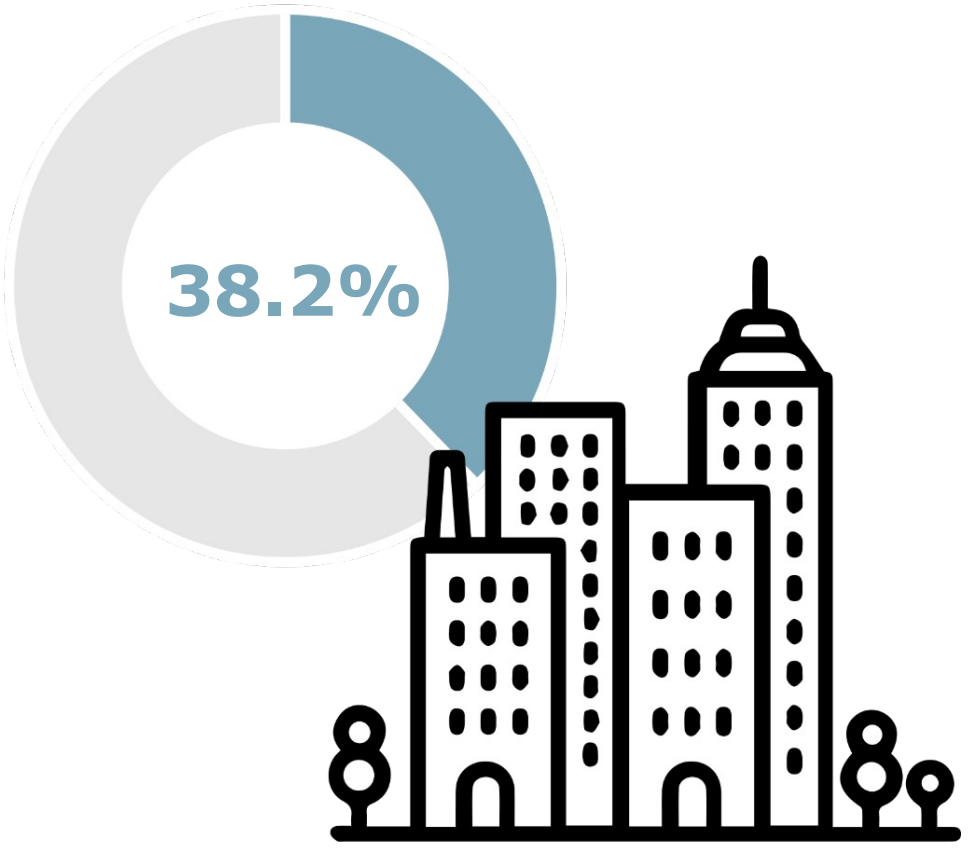
Somewhat, very, or extremely likely to use telemedicine in the future by age, 2021



Rural Coloradans Are Less Likely to Use Telemedicine

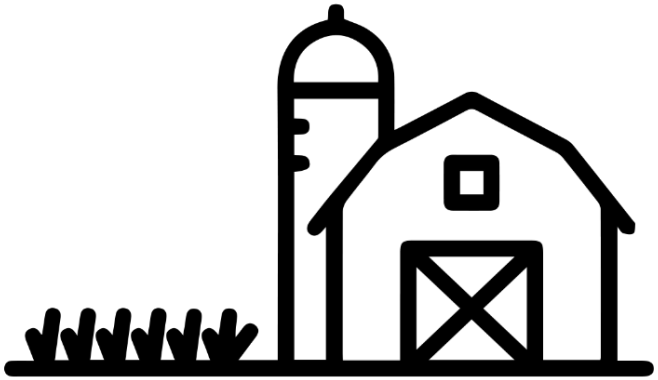


Rural



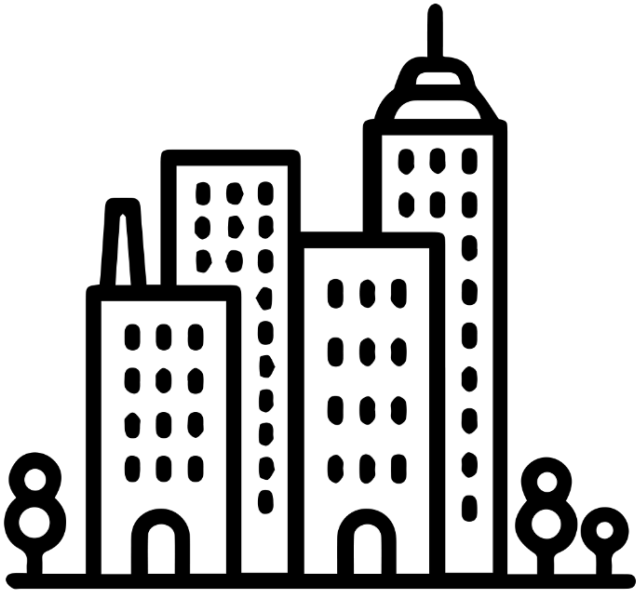
Urban

Of Telemedicine Users …



40%

of Rural Coloradans



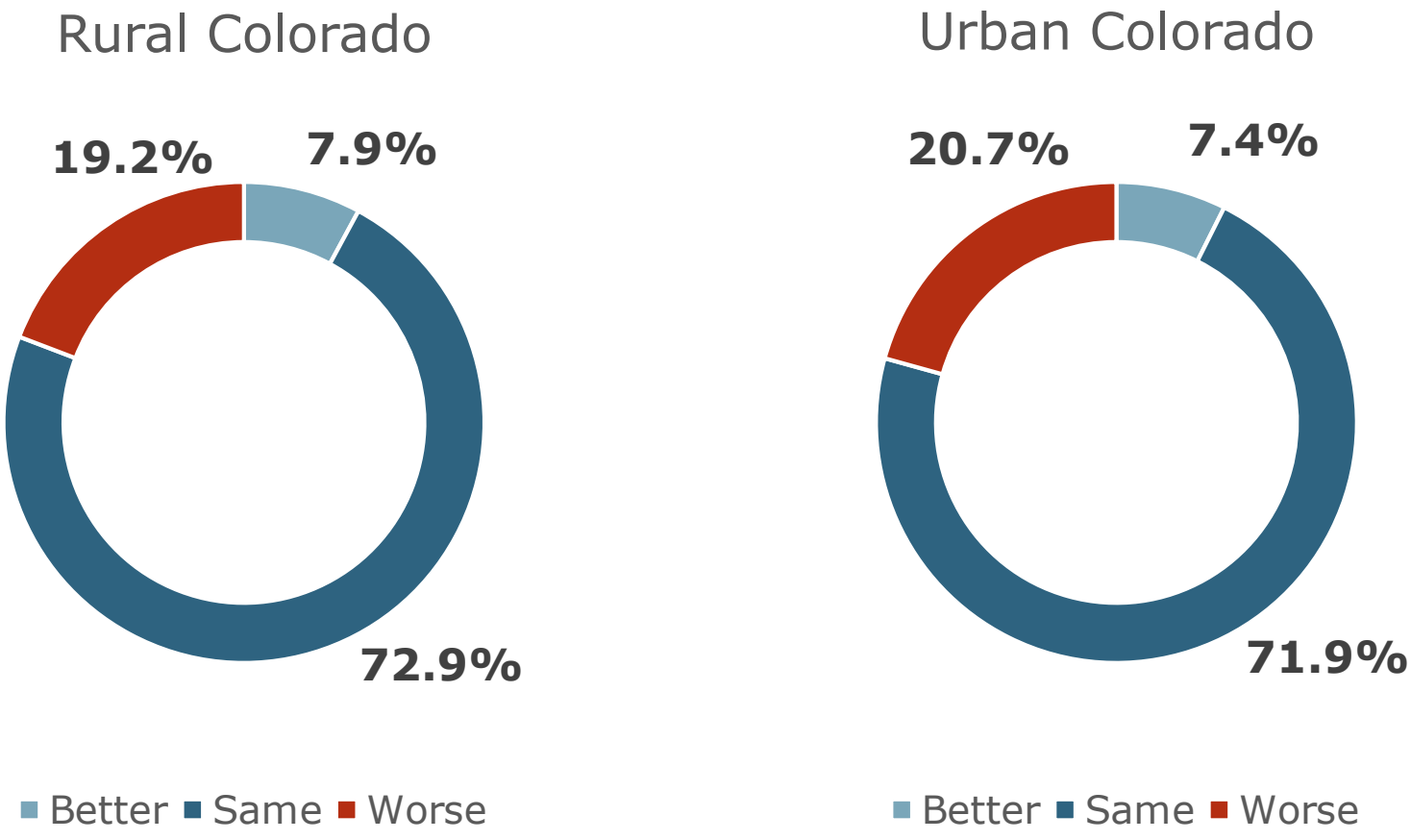
30%

of Urban Coloradans

… had most recent visit by phone

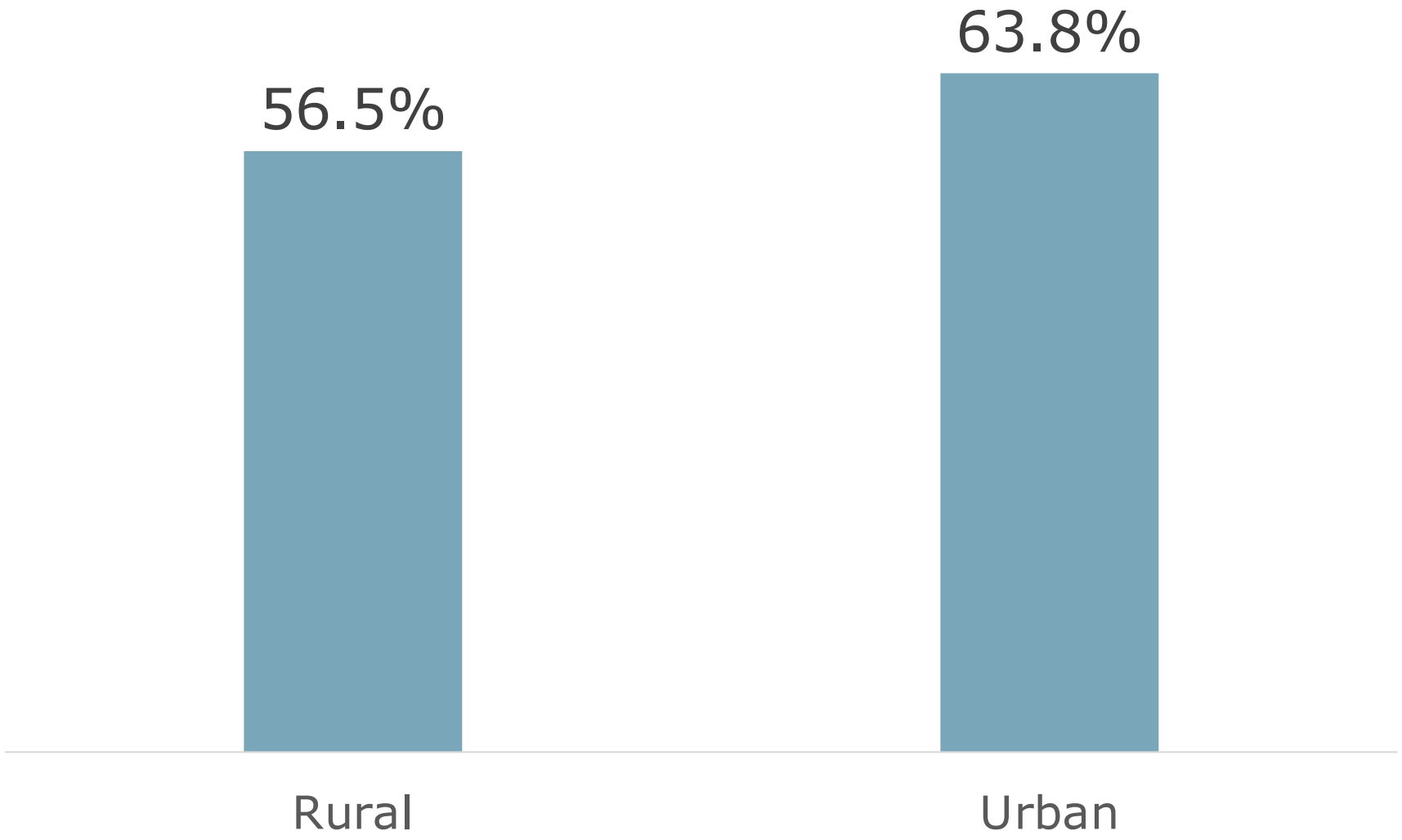
Rural Coloradans Give Telemedicine High Marks …

Telemedicine quality vs in-person care by geography, 2021



… But Future Use Is Less Likely

Somewhat, very, or extremely likely to use telemedicine in the future, 2021



Hesitation

More than **one in three** Coloradans say they're unlikely to use telemedicine in the future.

Common Barriers Are Care Quality and Technology

Needs can’t be taken care of by phone or video	45.6%
Waiting for care to go back to normal	33.3%
Quality concerns	27.8%
Not sure how to use	16.3%
Worried about cost	12.5%
Provider doesn’t offer	7.4%
No or unreliable internet access	6.4%
Not as confidential as in-person care	6.4%
No private place for visit	5.8%
No computer, tablet, or smartphone	5.6%

Older Coloradans were **more than twice as likely** to say they didn't know how to use telemedicine or didn't have a computer, tablet, or smartphone.

Rural Coloradans were
no more likely to cite
poor internet connection.

Three Takeaways

1. More than a third of Coloradans used telemedicine in 2021.

2. Most had a positive experience.

3. Many Coloradans worry about telemedicine care quality.

Questions?

THE CHAS ONLINE AND INTERACTIVE

CHAS data are available in a number of formats to make them as useful as possible

- Topical Workbooks
- Regional Profiles
- Public Use File
- Storybook
- Survey Questionnaire
- Methodology Report

This and more at colo.health/CHAS21

Support the

Emily Johnson
johnsone@coloradohealthinstitute.org

COLORADO HEALTH INSTITUTE
coloradohealthinstitute.org