Telecommunications

Technological advances in recent years have made it possible for people to complete many tasks from the comfort of their own home, including working and accessing medical care. Increases in the prevalence of teleworking seem to be occurring in situations where individuals work remotely only on a part-time basis. People who telework seem to shift their trip times to non-traditional commute hours; working remotely does not seem to reduce the total number of trips that a person takes.

In Minnesota, telemedicine takes a variety of different forms. Direct patient to practitioner services like HealthPartner’s virtuwell or CentraCare’s eClinic allow patients to connect with a healthcare professional to treat a list of common ailments that are often treated at urgent care facilities. In other cases, telemedicine is used to connect specialists at one healthcare facility to doctors and patients at an off-site facility.

Telemedicine can be especially vital in emergency situations when every second counts and time spent traveling to a specialist may be the difference between successfully treating a patient or not.[[1]](#footnote-1) Beyond emergency situations, advances in telemedicine can help to connect small rural clinics to medical professionals in larger urban areas without placing significant travel demands on patients. It can also allow for real-time communication of vital statistics or condition monitoring between patients and practitioners. This can be especially important for Minnesota’s seniors who may not want or be able to drive themselves to an appointment in a distant community.

# RElated Trends

* Transportation Behavior
* New Logistics
* Aging Population
1. [Cronin, 2014](https://www.minnpost.com/health/2014/08/minnesota-responds-rural-doctor-shortage-teams-training-telemedicine) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)