

# AAFP: Telemedicine can help with increased demand for docs

February 17 2014

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(HealthDay)—Telemedicine offers a potential solution to the increased demand for physician-patient interaction, according to a report from a recent forum. The forum was hosted by the Robert Graham Center for Policy Studies in Family Medicine and Primary Care, and the results of the discussion were published by the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP).

Noting that implementation of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act is leading to increased demand for physician-patient interaction, forum panelists highlighted the potential of telemedicine as a solution.

According to the report, the quality of patient care is not compromised by telemedicine, but is delivered via different channels. Telemedicine can save time for patients, reduce emergency department visits, and allow physicians to consult with more patients. The need for telemedicine is particularly acute in states with large rural populations such as Arkansas, in which 73 of 75 counties are designated as medically underserved. A program for Arkansas' [family physicians](#), obstetricians, neonatologists, and pediatricians has expanded its [telemedicine program](#) and has increased patient access to specialty care. Increasing use of telemedicine has been shown to reduce emergency department visits among schoolchildren; telemedicine could handle 85 percent of pediatric primary care office visits and 40 percent of emergency department visits. Furthermore, [telemedicine](#) allows patients to self-manage their conditions; for example, allowing veterans to live independently at home.

"Telemedicine is not different medicine," Jason Mitchell, M.D., director of the AAFP's Center for Health IT, said in a statement. "It's a different interaction."

**More information:** [More Information](#)

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Citation: AAFP: Telemedicine can help with increased demand for docs (2014, February 17) retrieved 15 February 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2014-02-aafp-telemedicine-demand-docs.html>

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