COVID-19 Conversations

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The Pandemic’s Impact on How Americans Get Care

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Why do we care about non-COVID related visits?

• What is the clinical impact of the pandemic?
• What is the economic impact of the pandemic?
In mid-March a rapid and dramatic decline in number of visits in the US

Note: Data are presented as percentage change in number of visits in a given week from the baseline week (March 1–7). Data for week of April 12 are through April 16.
Through mid-May, a bit of a rebound

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Telemedicine has become a common way of getting care

*Number of telehealth visits in a given week as a percent of baseline total visits*
Increase in telehealth only partially offsets the drop seen among in-person visits
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Drop in visits much larger among some specialties

Percent change in visits from baseline
Greatest decline in visits among children, oldest adults

Percent change in visits from baseline

- Ages 75+
- Ages 65–74
- Ages 18–64
- Ages 6–17
- Ages 3–5
- Ages 0–2

Week starting 04/05
Week starting 05/10
What should we be worried about in the coming months?

- Patients dying because didn’t get care they needed
- ‘Second pandemic’ of undertreated chronic illness
People are saying: ‘So I’m having a heart attack. I’m going to stay home. I’m not going to die in that hospital,’’ said Dr. Marlene Millen.

One woman told the group that every time she has to go in for a scan, or blood work, “I have a borderline meltdown.”
What should we be worried about in the coming months?

• Patients dying because didn’t get care they needed
• ‘Second pandemic’ of undertreated chronic illness
• Increasing preventive care gaps such as fewer immunizations
• Capacity to serve increasing mental illness needs
• Apparent paradox that, despite a global pandemic, many clinics may go out of business