

Kareo Study Shows Growing Demand for Mental Health Services is Supported by Rapid Adoption of Telehealth

New Kareo Mental Health Guide Details Use of Technology Needed to Support Progressive Mental Health Practices

IRVINE, Calif., July 23, 2020 - In a survey conducted by [Kareo](#) in June of this year in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, 96% of mental health practices remained open and seeing patients. While a majority of independent healthcare practices experienced a decline in patient volume during the pandemic, nearly 50% of mental health practices experienced no decline, and in fact, more than half of that group actually saw an increase in patient volume. Kareo's survey also revealed a dramatic increase in the use of [telehealth technologies](#), especially in mental health practices where 97% are now using it for patient visits.

These striking results reflect the growing demand for mental healthcare among Americans and how the rapid adoption of telehealth technology by mental health practices has enabled these practices to be resilient throughout the pandemic. The survey, conducted by Kareo, the leading provider of cloud-based clinical and business management software solutions for independent healthcare practices, is one of a series of ongoing "snapshots" of the state of independent medical practices throughout the U.S. These results have been included in Kareo's newest complimentary guide entitled, [Modernize Your Mental Health Clinic](#), which is available for download.

Dan Rodrigues, chief executive officer of Kareo, pointed out that all the stressors associated with the pandemic and social distancing mandates have driven an increasing need for mental healthcare, which telehealth has been able to facilitate.

"Independent mental health clinics have taken advantage of recent telehealth regulatory updates to provide more progressive care options to their existing patients and to reach out to new patients to meet needs in underserved communities," said Rodrigues. "This is a sea change in the profession and will influence the delivery of mental healthcare for years to come."

Regulatory restrictions on telehealth have been eased dramatically, so patients have increased access to care without providers being out of HIPAA compliance. Moreover, the [CMS will now](#) reimburse federally qualified health clinics and rural health clinics for telehealth services provided. In [some states](#), the government has also mandated that insurers reimburse telehealth services delivered by in-network providers at the same rate as face-to-face visits.

As a result of these changes, a dramatic increase in the use of telehealth services has occurred, especially in mental health practices. While a 2019 study by Kareo showed only 22% of all independent practices were offering telehealth, Kareo's recent June survey found that 97% of mental health practices now use telehealth. When asked if they intended to continue using telehealth after the pandemic ends, 88% of mental health practices responded yes.

Utilizing telehealth services can help to alleviate the shortage of mental health providers. As of [2019, over 112 million Americans were living](#) in designated mental health professional shortage areas (HPSAs). These areas require more than 6,100 additional mental health providers to meet the needs of people in those areas and the shortage is expected to worsen by 2025.

While telehealth regulations and reimbursement will likely return to more stringent requirements following the pandemic, the successful use of the technology has provided a dramatic test case for regulators and practitioners alike. Particularly in the case of mental healthcare, wherein patients may feel more comfortable and able to cope in their own environment, the likelihood that telehealth will remain a major method of care delivery is indisputable.

In addition to telehealth usage, the study also explored other shifts practices are experiencing. For example, 67% of mental health practices expect a surge in patient volume following the pandemic. The survey also found that 53% of mental health practices and 47% of other specialties believe that changes made to their practice due to the pandemic will likely be permanent. The two biggest changes practices have made or are considering are expanding their practice (27% for mental health;

18% for other specialties) and changing their practice model to a concierge or other model (29% for mental health; 35% for other specialties).

Best practices described in Kareo's new mental health guide provide further detail on how mental health clinics can employ technology to increase efficiency and provide a more progressive patient experience. [Modernize Your Mental Health Practice](#) is available now for download.

About Kareo

[Kareo](#) is the leading cloud-based and complete medical technology platform purpose-built to meet the unique needs of independent practices and the [billing companies](#) that serve them. Today Kareo helps over 50,000 providers across all 50 states run a more efficient and profitable practice, while setting them up to deliver outstanding patient care. Kareo has received extensive industry recognition, including the Deloitte Technology Fast 500, Inc. 5000, and Black Book's ranking of leading vendors for [Integrated EHR](#), [Practice Management and Medical Management](#) and [Medical Billing solutions](#), as well as ranking at the [top of the Leader Quadrant in the FrontRunners Software Analysis of EHR](#). Kareo's growth further demonstrates the expansion and vitality of the independent practice market in the U.S. With offices across the country, Kareo's mission is to help independent practices - and the billing companies that support them - succeed in an ever-changing healthcare market. More information can be found at www.kareo.com.