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Keeping the Telephone in Telehealth for Provider Visits Is an Essential Lifeline That Must Continue After the Pandemic

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My first telehealth appointment of the day was with a mother who had moved into a motel with her two children after losing her apartment. The last appointment I was unsuccessful in reaching her, and we finally reached each other for our scheduled telehealth appointment by phone. She had tried to connect with me on video, but her kids were using it for school too and they kept losing the audio. My next telehealth appointment was with a patient who was riding the bus to Fresno to stay at her cousin's for a while. She really wanted to talk with me before she got to a house with so many people living there and little privacy.

For patients like these, a simple phone call can be their best—or only—connection to health care.