

# NEW SURVEY DETAILS BENEFITS OF REMOTE CARDIAC REHAB

## Virtual Platform Increases Compliance, Satisfaction and Ongoing Engagement

- *September 19-24, 2022 National Telehealth Awareness Week*

In spite of the devastation caused by COVID, heart disease remains the number one killer among adult men and women in the US. We all know that a well-managed rehabilitation program can dramatically impact the health and well-being of cardiac patients. However, according to the American Heart Association, an astounding 80% of patients DO NOT follow prescribed rehabilitation; many experience relapses or rehospitalizations as a result.

Studies have shown many reasons for this lack of compliance: Simple motivation is one. Limited access is another. Outpatient facilities are not always accessible, particularly for seniors, lower income patients and those in rural areas, Fortunately, virtual medical care – telehealth – directly addresses these issues.

Since 2020, physical distancing due to the COVID pandemic accelerated the trend toward remote care. And yet, a recent survey found many remote rehab patients reporting other factors prevented them from traveling to a physical outpatient location anyway.

The survey, conducted among patients referred by their physicians who now or did participate in a new rehab program through [RecoveryPlus.health](https://RecoveryPlus.health), identifies less than 1/3 of respondents who started this form of activity due to Covid. Other reasons include **General mobility challenges** (14%), **No facility nearby** or the **Expense of getting to one** (14%). Others cited as the specific reason they're in the program, that their **Doctor prescribed this virtual option** (20%).

**Once patients have been guided through** onboarding via telephone or videoconferencing by an experienced rehab care specialist, remote rehab **drives engagement**. Almost 68% of patients responding to the survey cited **Convenience** as the feature they like best; 55% listed its **Simplicity to use**, and almost half (over 48%) appreciate that “my” primary care **Doctor is kept informed** about their progress, through the proprietary physician dashboard. More than one-third of patients (36%) cited the **One-to-one relationship** they have with their individual care manager, sometimes an exercise therapist, sometimes an LPN, on a regular, usually weekly, basis.

**Top three goals** that survey respondents listed for engaging in remote rehab were:

1. Having **Regular contact with a healthcare professional** (50%)
2. **Avoiding relapse or losing progress** they’ve made (47%)
3. Fulfilling the **Prescription** from the primary care physician or cardiologist (40%)

Patients also referenced the value of “increasing general movement” and “maintaining balance and stamina.” As they work toward their personal goals, patients are already recognizing important improvements, again mirroring outpatient rehab results, such as:

1. **Feeling better** (23%)
2. **Being more informed** about their own health (18%)
3. **Feeling taken care of** by staff (18%)

**The qualities valued most in one’s healthcare managers** include:

1. They understand and/or have experience with my illness (52%)
2. Have a pleasant personality (48%)
3. Ability to personalize the program to fit my needs (45%)

The level of patience and compassion of any good exercise therapist, doctor or other specialist whom they work with is critical. And, in one of the most revealing results, the **vast majority of respondents (81%) said they plan to continue this regimen “for as long as I can,”** beyond the length of time prescribed by their doctor. For many patients who experienced a medical issue and are now on their way to recovery, the exercises, monitoring and regular movement open the way toward an entirely reimagined lifestyle.

**There are still challenges.** Only 14% percent of patients had difficulty setting up Zoom, using the phone, or with some other aspect of technology. When asked “what they don’t like about” the program, we hear similar complaints that come with any rehab program, remote or not, such as **“I don’t feel like doing it every week” or “I’m too tired.”** In remote care, these concerns are immediately addressed with the patient, and the program is easily adjusted.

Our survey was conducted among patients from 28 to 87 years old with almost one-third (31%) in their 80s. The majority, 88%, are 50 or over. Most (54%) are male. Most are retired and current patients. Approximately one-fifth (22%) have only been engaged in remote rehab for 3 months or less. Less than half, 42%, live at home alone; the rest with a family member or caregiver. Clearly, telehealth is here to stay, and really making a difference in people’s lives.

For more information about the survey, please visit [RP Patient Survey Results](#).

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