



Background

- The COVID-19 Pandemic made telehealth a necessity for many.
- Telehealth has become a staple for receiving healthcare in a non-traditional format
- Access to telehealth services is critical in decreasing barriers to preventive and primary care.

Research Questions

- How often is telehealth offered instead of traditional, in-person visits?
- How has telehealth utilization changed since the onset of the COVID-19 Pandemic?
- Are there disparities that impact telehealth utilization?

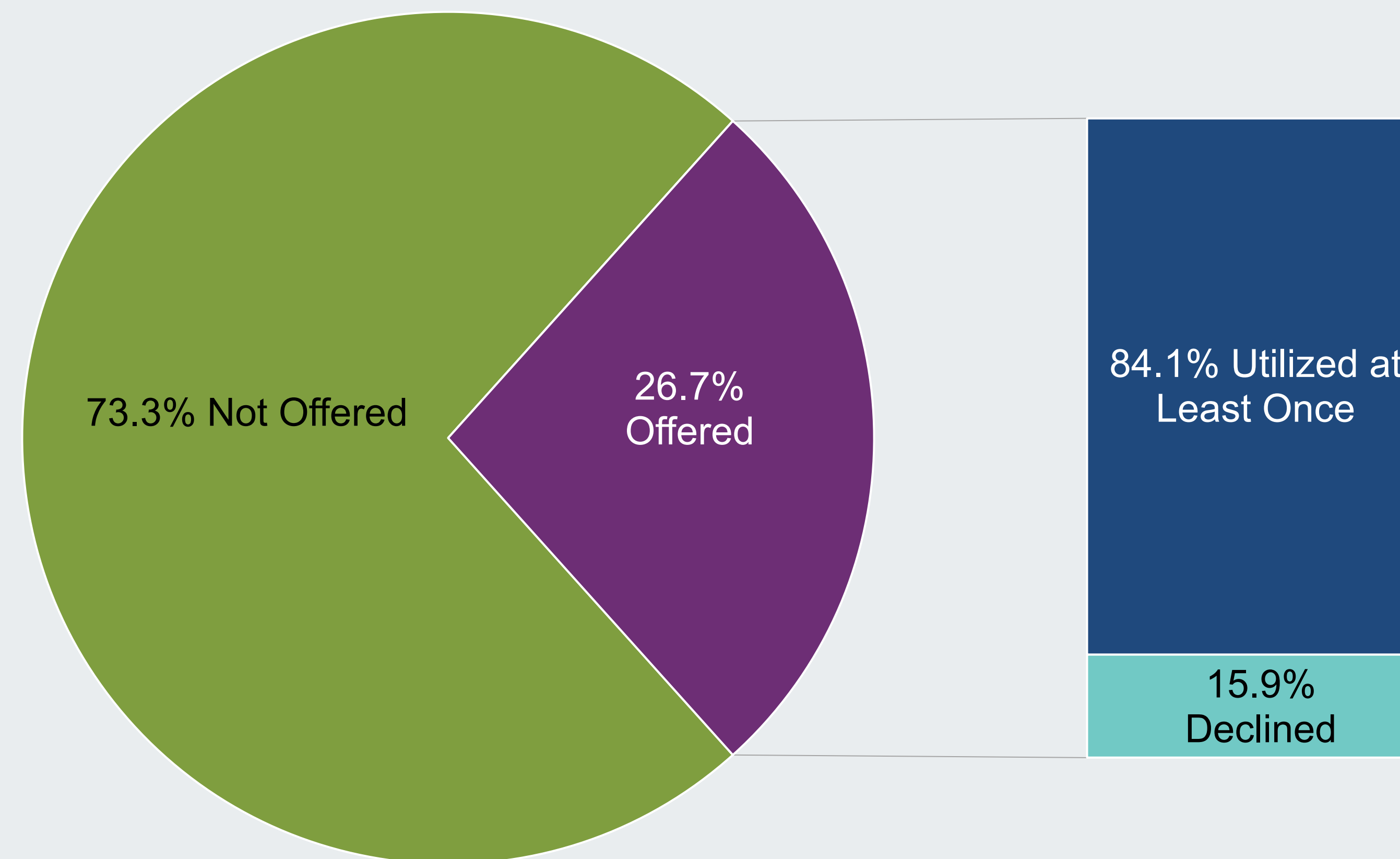
Data Sources

- Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS®) Survey – 2021 and 2022. NC Medicaid Division of Health Benefits administered six supplemental questions to adult beneficiaries regarding experiences with telehealth (collected by an External Quality Review Organization).
- Encounter Data
- Claims Data

Telehealth Opportunity & Utilization

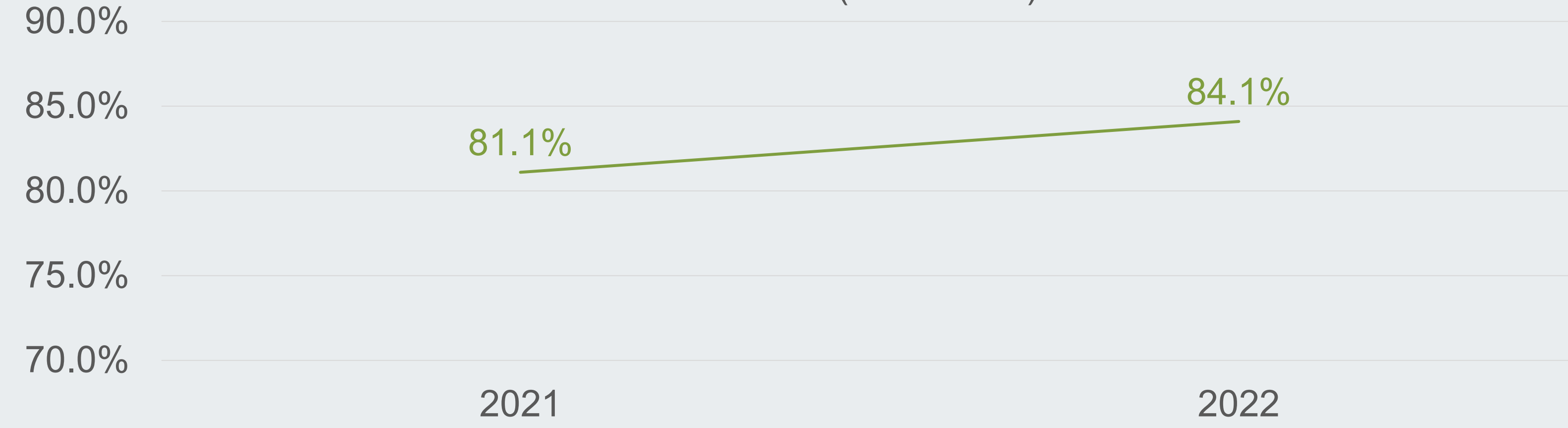
In 2022, telehealth was offered to adult Medicaid beneficiaries approximately 26.7% of the time. 84.1% of beneficiaries utilized telehealth services at least once when offered.

Percent of Adult Medicaid Beneficiaries Utilized Telehealth Instead of an In-Person Appointment When Offered (2022)



Between 2021 and 2022, telehealth utilization among adult Medicaid beneficiaries increased by 3.0 percentage points when telehealth was offered.

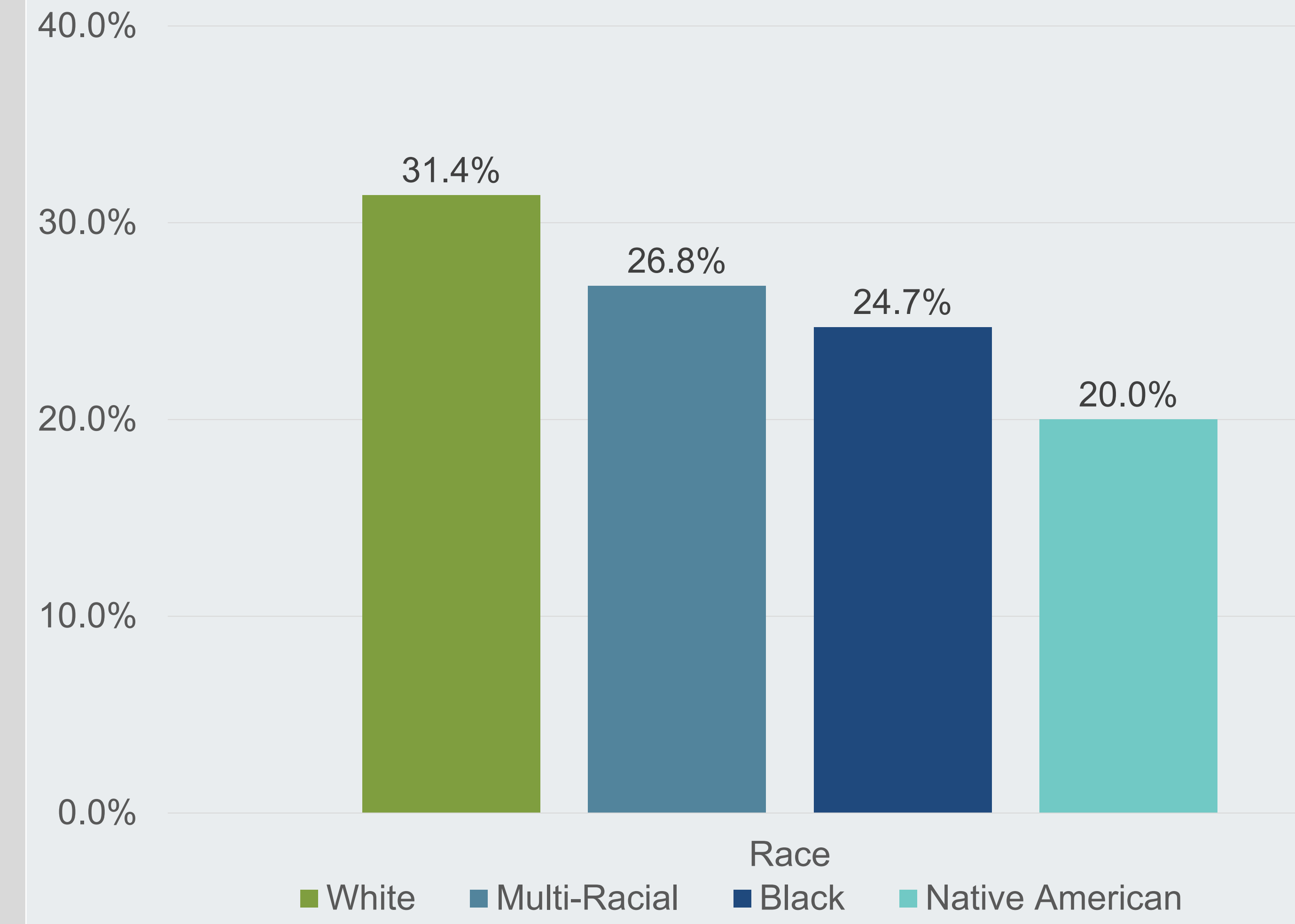
Percent of Adult Medicaid Beneficiaries Utilized Telehealth At Least Once When Offered (2021-2022)



Racial Disparities in Telehealth Opportunity & Utilization

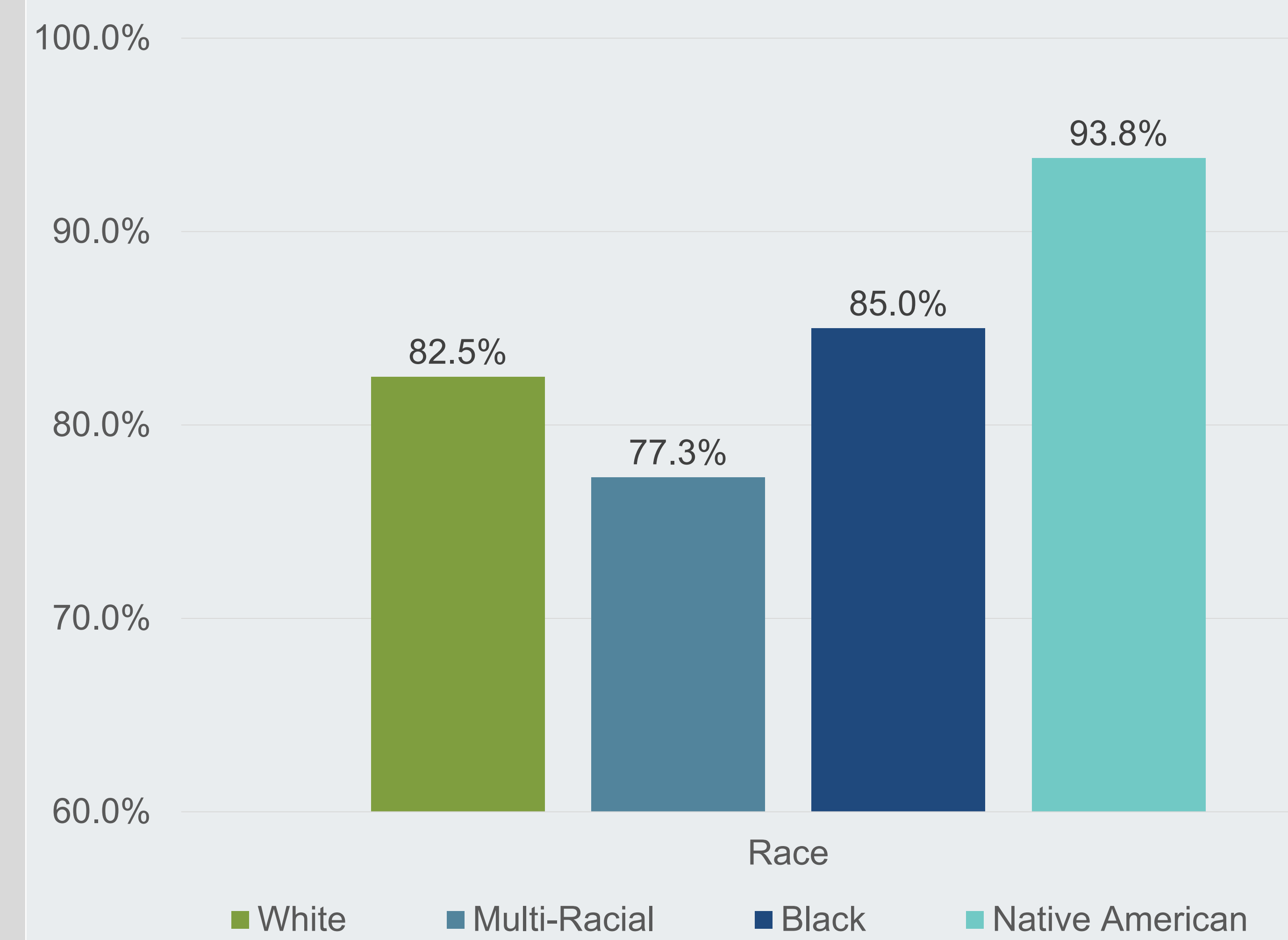
In 2022, it was found that adult Medicaid beneficiaries were offered telehealth services at differing rates. Beneficiaries that were multi-Racial, Black, and Native American reported being offered telehealth services less often than their white counterparts.

Percent of Adult Respondents Offered Telehealth Instead of an In-Person Appointment, by Race (2022)



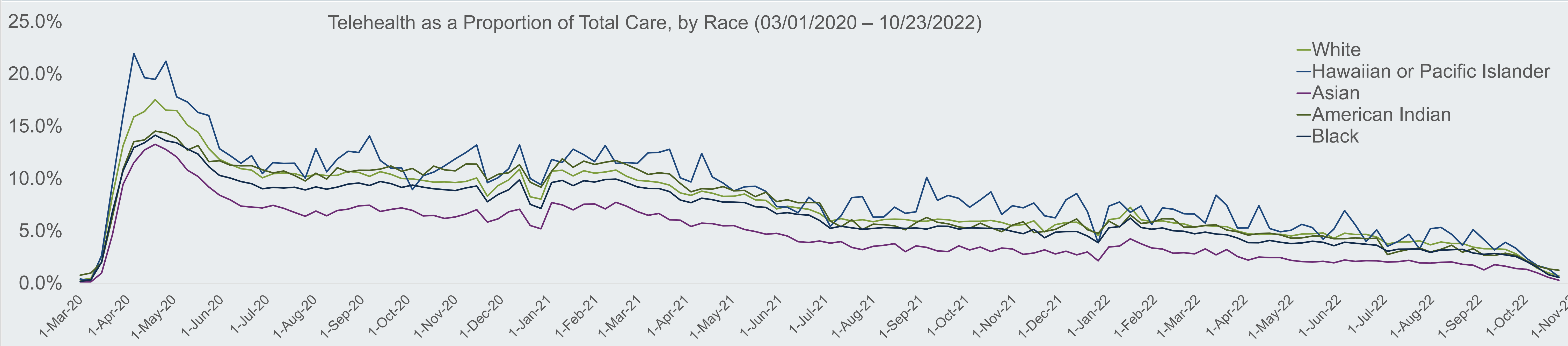
In 2022, beneficiaries that identified as Black or Native American reported utilizing telehealth more when offered compared to their white counterparts, despite being offered telehealth at lower rates.

Percent of Adult Respondents Utilized Telehealth at Least Once When Offered, by Race (2022)



Encounter and Claims Results

Between 2020 and 2022, Medicaid beneficiaries that were White and Hawaiian or Pacific Islander had the highest rates of utilization compared to beneficiaries of other races.



Summary

When telehealth is offered as an alternative to an in-person appointment, North Carolina Medicaid beneficiaries tend to utilize at high rates. Encounter and claims data denote a decrease in telehealth utilization as an overall proportion of total health care, however, when it's offered, there is a slight increase in utilization over time. When stratifying by race, it was found that beneficiaries who were multi-racial, Black, and Native American were offered telehealth less often than their white counterparts. Despite this, Black and Native American beneficiaries reported utilizing telehealth at higher rates when it was offered compared to their white counterparts.

Recommendations

Conduct further research to determine if disparities are persistent over time. Continue to oversample beneficiaries that are among race/ethnic minority populations to ensure proper representation.

Evaluate current telehealth policies and practices among providers and Prepaid Health Plans that contract with North Carolina Medicaid.

Increase the usage of data visualizations of disparities in dissemination plans to highlight the need for targeted intervention.