

Amazon expands health care push in United States

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Amazon is expanding its telemedicine service nationwide in the United States as it continues a push into health care. Credit: AFP

Amazon on Tuesday announced its telemedicine service has expanded nationwide in the United States, a new extension of the firm's empire

that has steadily gone far beyond e-commerce.

First launched in 2019 to provide Amazon employees with access to doctors, Amazon Care was made available to other employers last year in the company's home state of Washington.

The service combines virtual doctor or nurse visits using an Amazon Care [mobile app](#) with in-person care by medical personnel dispatched to patients' homes, the tech company said in a statement.

Amazon Care virtual [health](#) services are now available nationwide and in-person services will be rolled out in more than 20 new cities this year, Amazon said.

The telemedicine industry soared amid coronavirus restrictions and Americans' use has since held steady at about 38 times over pre-pandemic levels, according to a McKinsey & Company report from July.

At the same time, Americans typically get their [health insurance](#) through their jobs, so the current hiring crunch in the United States has pushed employers to offer increasingly attractive benefits.

"As more and more organizations look for convenient, comprehensive, high-quality [health care](#) solutions, we're seeing growing demand," the Amazon statement said.

In addition to selling everything from books to [fresh produce](#), running an online video platform and its cloud computing service, Amazon has also offered an online pharmacy since late 2020 in the United States.

Amazon's push into health care has prompted speculation as to whether it will shake up the medical insurance industry to the same degree it has reshaped retail.

Like other Big Tech giants, Amazon faces investigations, lawsuits and proposed legislation over its dominance, including how it uses its e-commerce platform to favor its goods over those of competitors.

But so far authorities have done little to curb the rush of these ubiquitous companies into consumers' daily lives.

In-person care through Amazon's care app is already available in major cities, including Boston; Dallas; Los Angeles; Seattle; and Washington, D.C., according to Amazon.

The service is to begin delivering in-person care this year in other cities including Chicago, Miami, New York and San Francisco.

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