

“Out Of Control”: Dozens of Telehealth Startups Sent Sensitive Health Information to Big Tech Companies | The Markup

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Open the website of WorkIt Health, and the path to treatment starts with a simple intake form: Are you in danger of harming yourself or others? If not, what’s your current opioid and alcohol use? How much methadone do you use?

Within minutes, patients looking for online treatment for opioid use and other addictions can complete the assessment and book a video visit with a provider licensed to prescribe suboxone and other drugs.

But what patients probably don’t know is that WorkIt was sending their delicate, even intimate, answers about drug use and self-harm to Facebook.

A joint investigation by STAT and The Markup of 50 direct-to-consumer telehealth companies like WorkIt found that quick, online access to medications often comes with a hidden cost for patients: Virtual care websites were leaking sensitive medical information they collect to the world’s largest advertising platforms.

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