

Telehealth for Behavioral Health Care

We are committed to the care and well-being of our members. We are also committed to working with you as a partner to develop the best possible treatment plans for all patients.

What is Behavioral Telehealth?

The COVID-19 public health emergency enabled the advancement of delivering care virtually, providing an opportunity for mental health providers to be reimbursed for behavioral telehealth services*, also known as teleBH.

Telehealth or telemedicine is the delivery of health care services using virtual technology. Providers can provide medical advice, a diagnosis, or a prescription by video or phone. It is a convenient way for patients to access health care services using a computer, tablet, or smart phone from the privacy and comfort of their own home. Additional benefits include:

- Reduced appointment and office wait times for patients.
- Faster and more equitable access to care and prescriptions.
- Decreased appointment cancellations by eliminating barriers such as need for childcare, missed work/school, and transportation.
- Provides patients with access to specialists who speak the same language or have similar cultural backgrounds.
- Increased comfort for patients to talk about mental health and substance use related concerns, who may have felt uncomfortable in an office setting.
- Enables increased scheduling capabilities to treat more patients.

What are Common TeleBH Services?

- Psychiatric assessments
- Individual online counseling
- Online group therapy
- Treatment related to substance use disorder
- Telepsychiatry for prescription monitoring and refills

How Can You Engage Patients in TeleBH?

- Help patients better understand what telehealth is, the benefits of virtual health care, and how to schedule a telehealth appointment.
- Provide extra guidance and support for patients to know how to access and troubleshoot your telehealth platform.
 - Send reminders and instructions ahead of the telehealth appointment to ensure access.
 - Explore the option of “rooming” which has shown more successful telehealth encounters.
 - Train support staff on the basics of your telehealth platform.
- Discuss patient rights and responsibility, set expectations, and plan for emergency situations at each appointment.
- Treat patients as if they are sitting across from you, avoid distractions and communicate with empathetic expressions just as you would if they were in your office.
- Check your state’s current laws and reimbursement policies, and code claims correctly.

Additional Support:

- [Center for Connected Health Policy](#) (CCHP) telehealth-related laws and regulations
- [Telehealth.HHS.gov](https://www.hhs.gov/telehealth)

**Telehealth is not to be used for any condition where patients are required to see a doctor or for medical emergencies.*

Please view the [Provider Resources](#) section of our website for additional tools and local resources or contact a Provider Relations or Quality Improvement Specialist for assistance.

This document is an informational resource designed to assist licensed healthcare practitioners in caring for their patients. Healthcare practitioners should use their professional judgment in using the information provided. HEDIS® measures are not a substitute for the care provided by licensed healthcare practitioners and patients are urged to consult with their healthcare practitioner for appropriate treatment. HEDIS® is a registered trademark of the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA). *2023 ICD-10 Diagnosis Codes **CPT copyright 2023 American Medical Association (AMA). All rights reserved. CPT is a registered trademark of the AMA.