

The T.E.A.M Project

Telehealth. Expanding. Access. Medically

Medical services are essential for maintaining a healthy lifestyle. There are many people in rural and urban areas with limited access to services for various reasons. Transportation has been reported as a significant contributor to why people are not able to access medical services.⁵ Telehealth services can help to rectify this problem and provide more medical services to more people.



Facts About Telehealth

- Overall, rural populations are sicker relative to their urban counterparts and experience higher rates of severe health conditions; these preexisting health conditions, coupled with lower access to health care and higher poverty rates, place rural communities at exceptionally high risk for experiencing complications from COVID-19. The expanded use of telehealth technology by medical professionals can produce healthier outcomes, but it also exposes the disparities in health status that still exist in rural areas. The rapid implementation of telehealth programs in rural areas in response to the COVID-19 pandemic holds tremendous potential for addressing rural health disparities.²
- In 2017, 13.8% of people living outside a metropolitan area were not covered by health insurance.¹
- Annual estimated savings in hospital cost as a result of telehealth services in rural areas is \$81,300 .¹
- 22% of Americans reported access to treatment/ long waiting times as a problem with the healthcare system.³
- 64% of Americans reported the cost of accessing treatment as the main problem with the healthcare system.³
- In 2019 U.S adult citizens reported "convenient locations" as the top three reasons that influence where they receive healthcare services

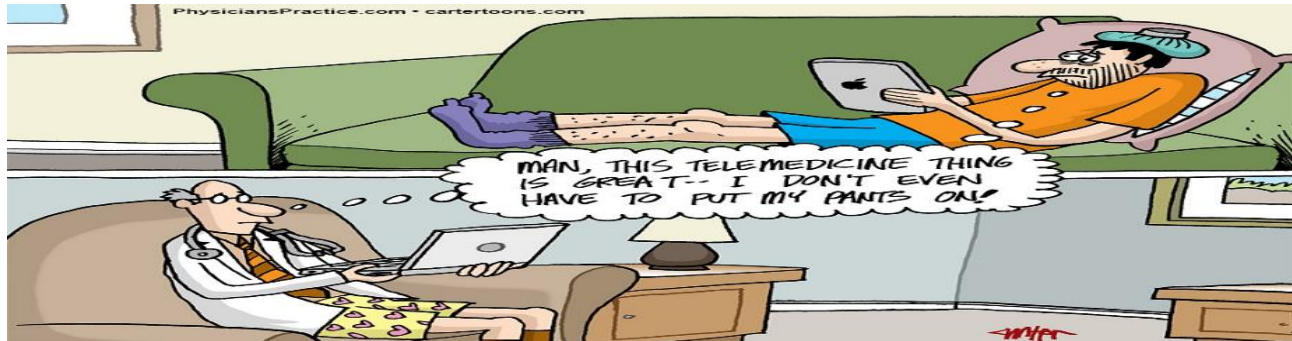
"Telehealth has changed my life. Before I used to be in a hospital several times a year, and forever at the G.P.s. I feel more in control and much better in myself now."

Bob, 67, who has lung disease

Concern: S.B. 8003-HB 8002 telehealth coverage law is flawed in that it has an end date of provisions for telehealth services. Despite having extended the allowance for telehealth services through April 2022, C.M.S., Medicare, other Federal Payors, Humana, and United Healthcare Medicare Advantage plans to end the provision of telehealth services covered in October 2020,

while United Healthcare commercial plans will end service on September 30, 2020.

Solution: The solution to this policy will be to repeal the amendment timeline and create a policy extending telehealth indefinitely. By removing the end date, telehealth services can be a permanent option for healthcare services.



“Telemedicine...’ It allows us to connect a patient to a doctor and it allows us to erase time and distance which is really the miracle of telemedicine”

*Jay Robbins
Director of Telemedicine
The Regional*

Supporters

American Telemedicine Association
International Council of Nurses (ICN) Telenursing Network
The Office of Advancement of Telehealth (O.A.T.)
Consortium of Telehealth Resource Centers

¹Elfein, J. (2020). *Topic: Rural and urban health in the U.S.* Statista. <https://www.statista.com/topics/4531/rural-and-urban-health-in-the-us/>

²Hirko, K. A., Kerver, J. M., Ford, S., Szafranski, C., Beckett, J., Kitchen, C., & Wendling, A. L. (2020). Telehealth in response to the COVID-19 pandemic: Implications for rural health disparities. *Journal of the American Medical Informatics Association*. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jamia/ocaa156>

³Ipsos. (2018). Percentage of adults in the U.S. who stated select issues were the biggest problems facing the healthcare system in their country as of 2018 [Graph]. In *Statista*. Retrieved September 25, 2020, from <https://www.statista.com/statistics/917159/leading-problems-healthcare-system-us/>

⁴Accenture (2019). Percentage of U.S. adults that said select aspects were most important in their decisions about seeking medical services as of 2019 [Graph]. In *Statista*. Retrieved September 25, 2020, from <https://www.statista.com/statistics/989653/factors-for-when-and-where-us-adults-look-for-medical-care/>

⁵Wolfe, M. K., McDonald, N. C., & Holmes, G. M. (2020). Transportation Barriers to Health Care in The United States: Findings from the national health interview survey, 1997-2017. *American Journal of Public Health*, 110(6), 815-822. <https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2020.305579>

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