

Telehealth has long provided increased access to care and convenience for patients, but waivers allowed broader portions of the population to experience the benefits of virtual care. The increased availability of telehealth services has transformed care delivery, expanded access for millions of Americans and increased convenience in caring for patients.

Given current health care challenges, including major clinician shortages, telehealth holds tremendous potential to leverage geographically dispersed provider capacity to support patient demand.

The AHA continues to work with Congress and the administration to enact telehealth reform to help providers and beneficiaries be able to utilize these services on a permanent basis.

Given the pending expiration of several waivers, we urge Congress to act to extend this critical lifeline for treatment and work towards a permanent pathway for provision of telehealth services.

Below are the AHA's telehealth advocacy priorities for 2025.

Permanently Adopting Enhanced Telehealth Policies

- Permanently eliminate originating and geographic site restrictions allowing telehealth visits to occur at any site which the patient is located, including urban areas and the patient's home.
- Permanently eliminate in-person visit requirements for tele-behavioral health, which would ensure that patients do not need an in-person visit before initiating virtual treatment.
- Permanently remove distant site restrictions on federally-qualified health centers and rural health clinics, which would ensure that they can continue to provide telehealth services.
- Permanently continue payment and coverage for audio-only telehealth services.
- Permanently expand eligible telehealth provider types to include physical therapists, occupational therapists, speech-language pathologists and audiologists.

Expanding Telehealth Workforce

- Permanently allow for virtual supervision by modifying the definition of direct supervision to include virtual presence of the supervising clinician.
- Permanently allow for virtual supervision of residents across geographies to include both Metropolitan Service Areas and Non-Metropolitan Service Areas.

Expanding Telehealth Workforce (continued)

- Permanently allow for virtual supervision for certain hospital outpatient services to include cardiac rehabilitation, intensive cardiac rehabilitation and pulmonary rehabilitation services.
- Permanently remove the requirement for telehealth providers to report their home address on enrollment and claims forms when administering services from their home.
- Remove unnecessary barriers to cross-state licensure.

Ensuring Fair and Adequate Telehealth Reimbursement

- Permanently cover virtual outpatient therapy services, diabetes self-management training, and medical nutrition therapy services to patients' homes.
- Expand eligible virtual services beyond professional services.

Supporting Telehealth for Rural and Underserved areas

- Permanently remove the in-person visit requirements for prescribing of controlled substances through the creation of a new, streamlined Special Registration Process for Telemedicine
- Expand cross-agency collaboration on digital infrastructure (to include broadband) and digital literacy initiatives.