

WHA POSITION

Telehealth has the potential to increase access to life-saving care in Wisconsin and improve patient outcomes without increasing costs for state taxpayers.

Support legislation to:

1. Treat telehealth the same as other health care services covered under Medicaid.
2. Help Medicaid catch up to Medicare in telehealth services.
3. Promote recovery outside the hospital by covering Medicaid telehealth services in a home or community setting.
4. Repeal the added layer of telehealth certification required of behavioral health providers.

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Modernize Medicaid's Telehealth Laws

Allow telehealth to reach its full potential - reduce costs, expand access

Highlights

- Wisconsin's Medicaid telehealth laws lag those of twenty other states and Medicare, but Governor Evers' budget includes several improvements.
- Telehealth certification for behavioral health providers continues to be a barrier.
- Aligning telehealth with in-person care delivery will increase access to care.

Technology is opening new opportunities for telehealth

As technology continues to advance, Wisconsin state law is not keeping up. Today, telehealth can help expand care options to areas that previously did not have them including lifesaving technologies for critical services, like telestroke. In addition to specialty care, telehealth brings numerous other benefits including virtual appointments, allowing providers to care for patients at home through remote patient monitoring, and enabling provider-to-provider consultations.

Outdated Medicaid policy creates inconsistent federal and state regulations

Unfortunately, Wisconsin's Medicaid program has not kept up with the pace of technology and falls behind Medicare in covering important services. Medicare covers 75 separate service codes today that Medicaid does not.

Additionally, Medicaid does not cover telehealth services if they take place in a patient's home – the patient must physically travel to a health care facility like a hospital or clinic for Medicaid to reimburse care. In some cases, this site restriction can defeat the very purpose for offering telehealth services.

Wisconsin's Medicaid program has a duplicative certification requirement for behavioral health providers to offer telehealth services, in addition to their professional licensure and certification with the Medicaid program.

WHA's Telehealth Work Group found that providers need less regulation and more certainty to encourage more widespread adoption of telehealth services.

- Providers rely on a mixture of both private and government payers. Expanded telehealth offerings that are not reimbursed by Medicaid result in losses.
- Wisconsin's requirement that behavioral health providers receive a separate certification for telehealth has led to delays in providers being able to offer behavioral health services and is a disincentive for providers to expand access.
- According to Manatt Health, Wisconsin ranks behind 20 other states based on public policy supporting telehealth and is one of only six states that doesn't allow Medicaid reimbursement of telehealth in a patient's home or a community setting.

CURRENT LICENSURE & CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS FOR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH TELEHEALTH

PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE
DSPS



MEDICAID CERTIFICATION
DHS



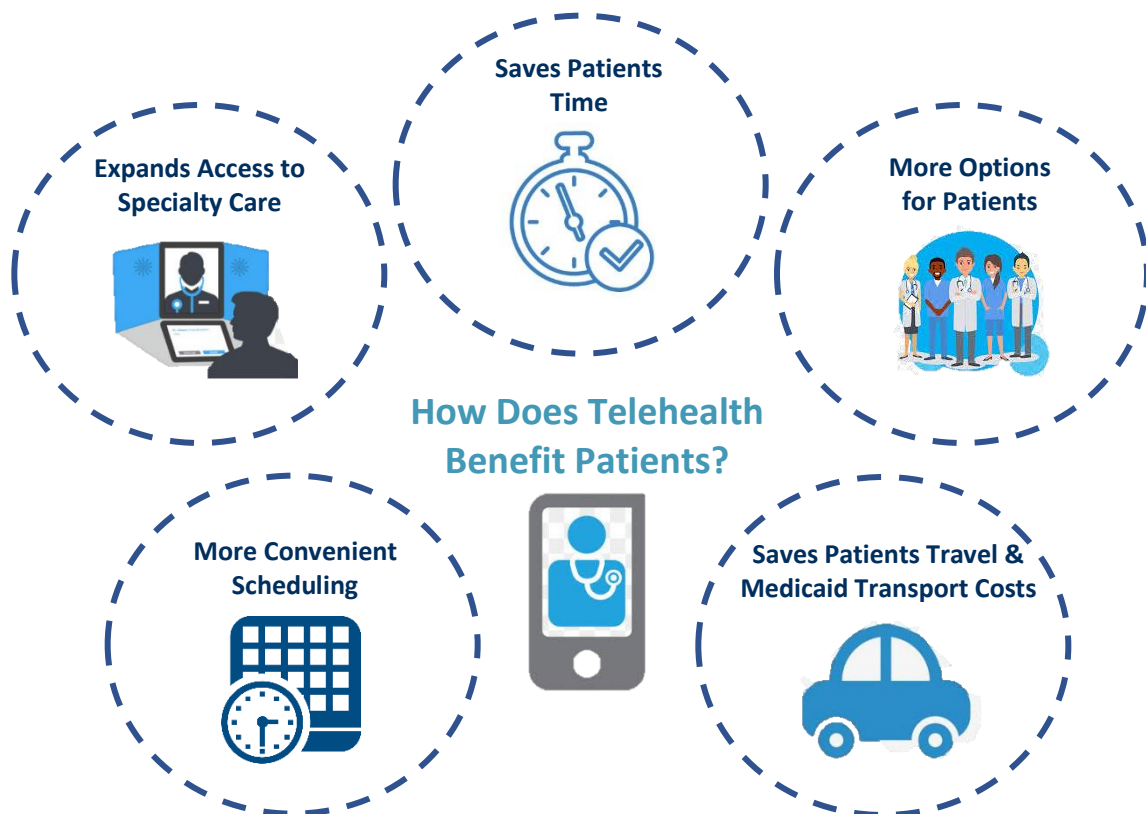
TELEHEALTH CERTIFICATION
DHS



Telehealth can benefit patients and providers without increasing costs for taxpayers

WHA supports expanding telehealth to help patients receive the care they need when they need it. A growing body of evidence suggests the benefits of telehealth as a vehicle for care delivery. This includes decreasing the number of emergency room visits and hospital admissions, offsetting costs associated with an increase in hospital utilization and reducing transportation costs for Medicaid enrollees.

- Wisconsin's Group Insurance Board decided in 2018 to cover all telehealth services for all state employees for the 2019 health plan year and estimated it to be cost neutral.
- A CMS review of telehealth found using it for transitional care programs for discharged Medicare patients saved \$1,333 per beneficiary, half of which was due to reduced inpatient follow-up care.
- The State of Wisconsin Medicaid program spent approximately \$100 million on emergency and non-emergency transportation of Medicaid patients in 2018. Telehealth could reduce these costs.



WHA Recommendation: Remove regulations that are a barrier to effectively deploy telehealth for patients

The Governor's budget proposal includes important investments in telehealth delivery for Medicaid enrollees. Wisconsin should take more steps to expand access to care and better manage patients in their home. More can be done to promote the use of telehealth by Medicaid providers, especially for behavioral health providers and post-discharge care.

Support legislation to:

1. Treat telehealth the same as in-person services.
2. Require Medicaid to cover telehealth services Medicare already covers.
3. Allow Medicaid reimbursement for telehealth provided at home or in the community.
4. Repeal the added layer of telehealth certification for behavioral health providers.