

Telehealth In The Pandemic & Beyond

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Use of Telehealth During The Pandemic

- According to research, telehealth usage grew twenty-three-fold during the pandemic
 - 30.1 percent of all outpatient visits were through telehealth
 - 53 percent of visits for the treatment of depression were through telehealth
- Comprehensive literature review found that telehealth is just as effective as in-person care for mental health services (and more cost effective)
- Figures vary, but no show rates for psychiatry dropped significantly due to telehealth

APA's Efforts on Telehealth

- Working with our members and district branches, we advocated for and supported the many temporary changes to telehealth insurance coverage made by states through executive orders, directives, and bulletins
- We have and are continuing to advocate for some of the temporary changes in insurance coverage to remain permanent
- APA and its members strongly prefer in-person care when possible, but recognize that for some patients access to care will always be more difficult or impossible without telehealth

APA Model Telehealth Insurance Coverage Legislation

- In conjunction with our Committee on Telepsychiatry, APA created model legislation regarding insurance coverage of telehealth
- Most important pillars of the legislation:
 - Reimbursement at the same rate as in-person (pay parity)
 - Audio only coverage under limited circumstances
 - Prohibits insurers from using utilization review for telehealth that is not used for in person care

Reimbursement Parity

- Given that research indicates that mental health care delivered through telehealth is just as effective as in-person care, reimbursement should be the same as well
- But isn't overhead lower for telehealth than for in person?
- Only if the provider shuts down her office and provides all care through telehealth at home
 - We are not aware of any psychiatrists who plan to do this
 - Most of our members are providing care in person to their patients in their offices AND providing telehealth to patients while physically based in their offices

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