



# Remove Barriers to Telehealth Innovation

## Support the **CONNECT** for Health Act of 2019 to improve rural care

More and more health care providers are using telehealth to improve access to patient care in everything from basic urgent care to highly specialized services like stroke care. Telehealth can be especially effective in increasing access to care in rural areas. **Yet, federal statute prohibits Medicare from covering telehealth services delivered to a patient's home, even in rural areas, and will not cover care in rural areas that do not have specific health professional shortage designations (HPSAs).**

### **Congress & CMS Have Taken Positive Steps, but More Needs to be Done**

In recent years, Congress and CMS have both taken steps to remove Medicare's payment restrictions under bipartisan legislation and annual rulemaking, including:

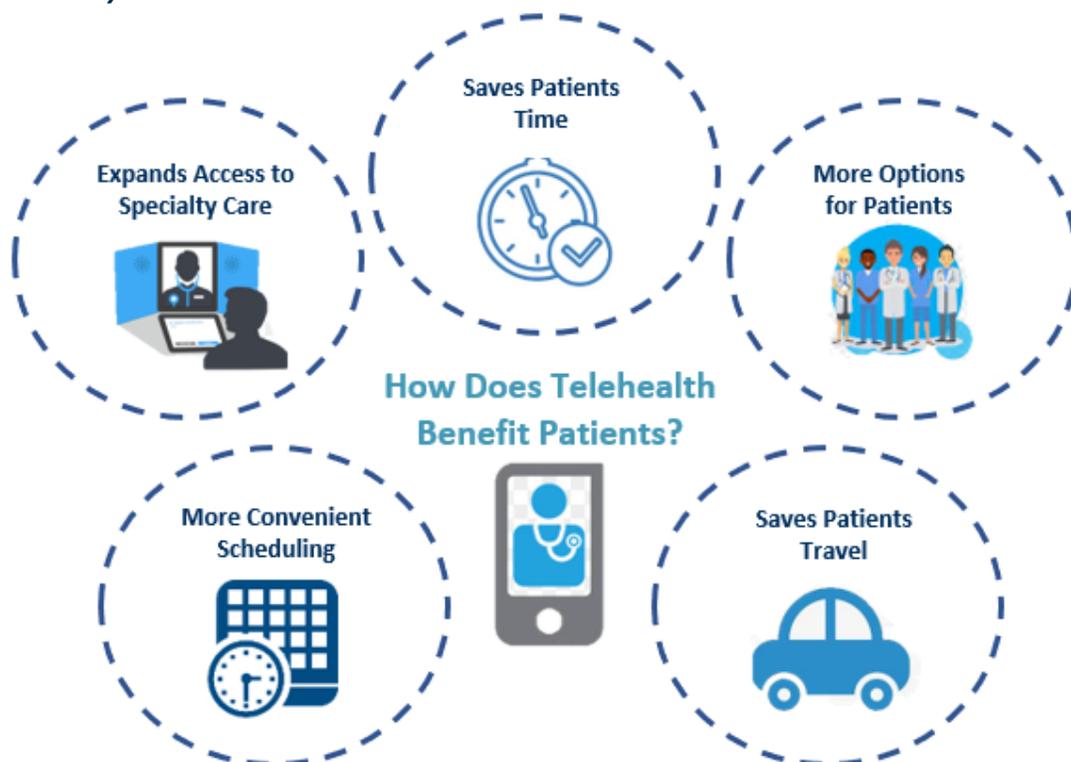
- Removing geographic restrictions for telestroke and teledialysis services.
- Removing telehealth restrictions for substance use or related mental health services.
- Adding new telehealth services annually in the physician fee schedule, including remote patient monitoring and virtual check-ins.

### **The **CONNECT** for Health Act of 2019 Will Break Down Barriers to Care**

This legislation takes positive steps toward removing Medicare's antiquated geographic site restrictions, such as:

- Authorizing HHS to waive barriers to telehealth if certain criteria are met.
- Allowing Medicare to cover behavioral health care via telehealth in any setting (urban and rural) including a person's home.
- Removing geographic barriers for EMS telehealth services.
- Allowing telehealth to be delivered by and originate at Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) and Rural Health Clinics.
- Providing flexibility for telehealth in hospice care.
- Requiring the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission (MEDPAC) to study the benefits of allowing Medicare to cover telehealth delivered to a patient's home.

***Please support this legislation to promote more effective and efficient health care delivery in Medicare!***



## WHA Position

More and more research suggests telehealth can help improve patient care while reducing or maintaining overall health care costs.

- The State of Wisconsin recently passed sweeping legislation requiring Medicaid to cover all telehealth services the same as face-to-face services.
- Unfortunately, restrictions persist in Medicare, which will not pay for telehealth in certain rural, or any urban settings, and will also not cover telehealth delivered to a person's home.
- WHA supports efforts to lift Medicare restrictions so Wisconsin health care providers can deliver more effective and efficient care.

## WHA Ask:

***Please cosponsor the bipartisan **CONNECT** for Health Act of 2019 H.R.4932 & S. 2741 that would lift unnecessary barriers to telehealth in Medicare.***

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