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What is the definition of “telemedicine” or “telehealth”?

Updated link and citation: [Alabama Medicaid, Provider Billing Manual, ch. 28 \(effective July 2017\), at 28-17.](#)

SOCIAL WORKERS

Are there any licensing requirements specific to telemedicine/telehealth (e.g., requirements to be licensed in the state where the patient is located)?

A license issued by the Alabama State Board of Social Work Examiners is required:

[N]o person may engage in the practice of social work, holding himself or herself forth as a ‘social worker,’ a ‘licensed bachelor social worker,’ a ‘licensed master social worker,’ or a ‘licensed independent clinical social worker,’” unless such person was licensed before August 1, 2016 “as a graduate social worker or a certified social worker.”

Additionally, “any license issued to a graduate social worker or a certified social worker prior to [August 1, 2016] shall continue to be valid for the duration of the license or until the appropriate redesignated license is issued by the board. Any person licensed by the board as a graduate social worker or a certified social worker on that date may continue to use the prior designated licensure titles for a period of two years or as otherwise provided by the board.”

[ALA. CODE § 34-30-20.](#)

MARRIAGE/FAMILY THERAPISTS

What is the regulatory body in the state that governs the practice of marriage/family therapy?

Updated link and citation: [Alabama Board of Examiners in Marriage and Family Therapy](#)

Does Medicaid provide coverage for telemental/telebehavioral/telepsychiatric health services? If so, what are the coverage criteria?

[A]ll physicians with an Alabama license, enrolled as a provider with the Alabama Medicaid Agency, regardless of location, are eligible to participate in the Telemedicine Program to provide medically necessary



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telemedicine services to Alabama Medicaid eligible recipients. In order to participate in the telemedicine program:

a. Physicians must be enrolled with Alabama Medicaid with a specialty type of 931 (Telemedicine Service).

b. Physician must submit the Telemedicine Service Agreement/Certification form which is located on the Medicaid website at: www.medicaid.alabama.gov.

c. Physician must obtain prior consent from the recipient before services are rendered, this will count as part of each recipient's benefit limit of 14 annual physician office visits currently allowed. A sample recipient consent form is located on the Medicaid website at: www.medicaid.alabama.gov.

Services must be administered via an interactive audio and video telecommunications system which permits two-way communication between the distant site physician and the origination site where the recipient is located (this does not include a telephone conversation, electronic mail message, or facsimile transmission between the physician, recipient, or a consultation between two physicians). Telemedicine health care providers shall ensure that the telecommunication technology and equipment used at the recipient site, and at the physician site, is sufficient to allow the health care physician to appropriately evaluate, diagnose, and/or treat the recipient for services billed to Medicaid. Transmissions must utilize an acceptable method of encryption adequate to protect the confidentiality and integrity of the transmission information. Transmissions must employ acceptable authentication and identification procedures by both the sender and the receiver.

The provider shall maintain appropriately trained staff, or employees, familiar with the recipient's treatment plan, immediately available in-person to the recipient receiving a telemedicine service to attend to any urgencies or emergencies that may occur during the session.

The physician shall implement confidentiality protocols that include, but are not limited to:

a. specifying the individuals who have access to electronic records; and

b. usage of unique passwords or identifiers for each employee or other person with access to the client records; and



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c. ensuring a system to prevent unauthorized access, particularly via the internet; and

d. ensuring a system to routinely track and permanently record access to such electronic medical information

These protocols and guidelines must be available to inspection at the telemedicine site, and to the Medicaid Agency upon request.

[Alabama Medicaid, *Provider Billing Manual*, ch. 28 \(effective July 2017\), at 28-17.](#)

CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES

How are “controlled substances” defined by the state?

Updated link and citation: [ALA. CODE § 20-2-2\(4\).](#)