



## RHODE ISLAND

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

Under Rhode Island’s Telemedicine Coverage Act, enacted in 2016 and codified as part of the state’s insurance code, “telemedicine means the delivery of clinical health-care services by means of real time, two-way electronic audiovisual communications, including the application of secure video conferencing or store-and-forward technology to provide or support health-care delivery, which facilitate the assessment, diagnosis, treatment, and care management of a patient’s health care while such patient is at an originating site and the health-care provider is at a distant site, consistent with applicable federal laws and regulations. Telemedicine does not include an audio-only telephone conversation, email message, or facsimile transmission between the provider and patient, or an automated computer program used to diagnose and/or treat ocular or refractive conditions.” [R.I. GEN. LAWS § 27-81-3\(12\)](#).

Rhode Island’s Board of Medical Licensure and Discipline has released telemedicine guidance that defines “telemedicine” as “the delivery of health care where there is no in-person exchange. Telemedicine, more specifically, is a mode of delivering health care services and public health utilizing information and communication technologies to enable the diagnosis, consultation, treatment, education, care management, and self-management of patients at a distance from health care providers.” [Rhode Island Board of Medical Licensure and Discipline, Guidelines for the Appropriate Use of Telemedicine and the Internet in Medical Practice \(2013\)](#).

## PSYCHIATRISTS

### What are the acceptable modalities (e.g., telephone, video) for the practice of psychiatry via telemedicine/telehealth that meet the standard of care for the state?

Under Rhode Island’s Telemedicine Coverage Act, enacted in 2016 and codified as part of the state’s insurance code, telemedicine is delivered “by means of real time, two-way electronic audiovisual communications, including the application of secure video conference or store-and-forward technology.” However, “telemedicine does not include an audio-only telephone conversation, email message, or facsimile transmission between the provider and patient, or an automated computer program used to diagnose and/or treat ocular or refractive conditions.” [R.I. GEN. LAWS § 27-81-3\(12\)](#).



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### PSYCHOLOGISTS

What are the acceptable modalities (e.g., telephone, video) for the practice of psychology via telemedicine/telehealth that meet the standard of care for the state?

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### SOCIAL WORKERS

What are the acceptable modalities (e.g., telephone, video) for the practice of social work via telemedicine/telehealth that meet the standard of care for the state?

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### COUNSELORS

What are the acceptable modalities (e.g., telephone, video) for the practice of counseling via telemedicine/telehealth that meet the standard of care for the state?

Under Rhode Island's Telemedicine Coverage Act, enacted in 2016 and codified as part of the state's insurance code, telemedicine is delivered "by means of real time, two-way electronic audiovisual communications, including the application of secure video conference or store-and-forward technology." However, "telemedicine does not include an audio-only telephone conversation, email message, or facsimile transmission



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between the provider and patient, or an automated computer program used to diagnose and/or treat ocular or refractive conditions.” [R.I. GEN. LAWS § 27-81-3\(12\)](#).

### MARRIAGE/FAMILY THERAPISTS

What are the acceptable modalities (e.g., telephone, video) for the practice of marriage/family therapy via telemedicine/telehealth that meet the standard of care for the state?

Under Rhode Island’s Telemedicine Coverage Act, enacted in 2016 and codified as part of the state’s insurance code, telemedicine is delivered “by means of real time, two-way electronic audiovisual communications, including the application of secure video conference or store-and-forward technology.” However, “telemedicine does not include an audio-only telephone conversation, email message, or facsimile transmission between the provider and patient, or an automated computer program used to diagnose and/or treat ocular or refractive conditions.” [R.I. GEN. LAWS § 27-81-3\(12\)](#).

### ADVANCED PRACTICE REGISTERED NURSES (APRNs)

What are the acceptable modalities (e.g., telephone, video) for the practice of advance practice nursing via telemedicine/telehealth that meet the standard of care for the state?

Under Rhode Island’s Telemedicine Coverage Act, enacted in 2016 and codified as part of the state’s insurance code, telemedicine is delivered “by means of real time, two-way electronic audiovisual communications, including the application of secure video conference or store-and-forward technology.” However, “telemedicine does not include an audio-only telephone conversation, email message, or facsimile transmission between the provider and patient, or an automated computer program used to diagnose and/or treat ocular or refractive conditions.” [R.I. GEN. LAWS § 27-81-3\(12\)](#).

### FOLLOW-UP CARE

What are the requirements regarding follow-up care for telemental/telebehavioral/telepsychiatric health services?

Rhode Island’s Board of Medical Licensure and Discipline has released telemedicine guidance (which, at a minimum, would apply to telepsychiatry services) that states the following: “[W]henever a patient’s clinical presentation suggests the need for an in-person physical examination, the patient should be referred for an in-person evaluation



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which is documented in the medical record. Failure to make necessary referrals or progressions to treatments without doing so constitutes unprofessional conduct.” [Rhode Island Board of Medical Licensure and Discipline, \*Guidelines for the Appropriate Use of Telemedicine and the Internet in Medical Practice\* \(2013\).](#)

### COVERAGE & REIMBURSEMENT

Does the state have a parity statute in place mandating coverage by private insurers for telemedicine/telehealth services (including telemental/telebehavioral/telepsychiatric health services) on par with those provided in face-to-face/in-person encounters?

Under Rhode Island’s Telemedicine Coverage Act, enacted in 2016 and codified as part of the state’s insurance code, the state requires that “[e]ach health insurer that issues individual or group accident-and-sickness insurance policies for health-care services and/or provides a health-care plan for health-care services shall provide coverage for the cost of such covered health-care services provided through telemedicine services, as provided in this section. A health insurer shall not exclude a health-care service for coverage solely because the health-care service is provided through telemedicine and is not provided through in-person consultation or contact, so long as such health-care services are medically appropriate to be provided through telemedicine services and, as such, may be subject to the terms and conditions of a telemedicine agreement between the insurer and the participating health-care provider or provider group.” However, “the requirements of this section shall apply to all policies and health plans issued, reissued, or delivered in the state of Rhode Island on and after January 1, 2018.” [R.I. GEN. LAWS § 27-81-4.](#)

Are there provisions requiring certain reimbursement levels/amounts for telemedicine/telehealth services (including telemental/telebehavioral/telepsychiatric health services)?

Rhode Island’s parity law does not specifically dictate reimbursement levels, but “[b]enefit plans offered by a health insurer may impose a deductible, copayment, or coinsurance requirement for a health-care service provided through telemedicine.” [R.I. GEN. LAWS § 27-81-4.](#)