

Telehealth for Behavioral Healthcare



We are committed to the care and well-being of our members. We are also committed to working with you as a partner to develop the best possible treatment plans for all patients.

What Is Behavioral Telehealth?

Telehealth or telemedicine is the delivery of healthcare services using virtual technology. Providers can provide medical advice, a diagnosis, or a prescription by video or phone. It is a convenient way for patients to access healthcare services using a computer, tablet, or smart phone from the privacy and comfort of their own home. Additional benefits include:

- ▶ Reduced appointment and office wait times for patients.
- ▶ Faster and more equitable access to care and prescriptions.
- ▶ Decreased appointment cancellations by eliminating barriers such as need for childcare, missed work/school, and transportation.
- ▶ Patient access to specialists who speak the same language or have similar cultural backgrounds.
- ▶ Increased comfort for patients to talk about mental health and substance use related concerns, who may have felt uncomfortable in an office setting.
- ▶ Increased scheduling capabilities to treat more patients.

What Are Common Services?

- ▶ Psychiatric assessments
- ▶ Individual online counseling
- ▶ Online group therapy
- ▶ Treatment related to substance use disorder
- ▶ Telepsychiatry for prescription monitoring and refills

How Can You Engage Patients?

- ▶ Help patients better understand what telehealth is, the benefits of virtual healthcare, and how to schedule a telehealth appointment.
- ▶ Provide extra guidance and support for patients to know how to access and troubleshoot your telehealth platform.
- ▶ Send reminders and instructions ahead of the telehealth appointment to ensure access.
- ▶ Explore the option of “rooming,” which has shown more successful telehealth encounters.
- ▶ Train support staff on the basics of your telehealth platform.
- ▶ Discuss patient rights and responsibility, set expectations, and plan for emergency situations at each appointment.
- ▶ Treat patients as if they are sitting across from you, avoid distractions, and communicate with empathetic expressions just as you would if they were in your office. Check your state’s current laws, reimbursement policies, and code claims correctly.

Additional Support

- ▶ [Center for Connected Health Policy](#) (CCHP) telehealth-related laws and regulations
- ▶ www.telehealth.hhs.gov

**Telehealth is not to be used for any condition where patients are required to see a doctor or for medical emergencies.*

Please view the **Provider** section of our website [ArkansasTotalCare.com/providers](https://www.arkansastotalcare.com/providers) for additional tools and local resources or contact a **Provider Relations** or **Quality Improvement Specialist** for assistance.