

The appropriate use of telehealth technologies offers healthcare providers, hospitals, and health plans ways to provide patients improved **access** to healthcare.

Telehealth plays a vital role

as Idaho strives to achieve the triple aim of improving

- quality and the patient experience;
- population health; and,
- affordability of healthcare.

Challenges:

- Healthcare providers need clear guidance for delivering care using telehealth in Idaho.
- Patients need to know they can trust the care they receive via telehealth is safe and secure.

What is the charter of the Idaho Telehealth Council?

The Council was convened to coordinate and develop a comprehensive set of standards, policies, rules and procedures for the use of telehealth and telemedicine in Idaho. The governor-appointed Council is comprised of physicians, hospitals, payers, regulators, and rural health representatives.

What does the Idaho Telehealth Access Act do?

The Act requires that telehealth services be within the scope of license and consistent with the current standards of care. The Act defines how a patient-provider relationship may be established without an in-person encounter and includes provisions for issuing prescription drug orders using telehealth services. Promoting continuity of care is also an important element within the Act.

Why is the Idaho Telehealth Access Act needed?

Telehealth helps address barriers to access due to provider shortages and reduces the need for patients to travel long distances to see a qualified healthcare provider in a cost-effective manner. Despite healthcare provider shortages, providers are reluctant to practice telemedicine in Idaho due to unclear policy. Payers also need clarity. The Act will increase access to care while keeping patients safe.

Highlights of the Idaho Telehealth Access Act

- Patient-provider relationships can be established without an in-person visit using two-way audio and video and maintained using electronic communications;
- Prescription drug orders can be issued using telehealth services with parameters [21 U.S.C. section 802 (54) (A)];
- Supports multi-disciplinary collaboration such as patient-centered medical homes;
- Decreases healthcare fragmentation; increases continuity of care; and,
- Telehealth services can be delivered within the provider's scope of license and consistent with the current standards of care.