

**Sample Content for Telehealth Practice Guidelines or Policy**  
**[Organization]**

*This sample language for a telehealth policy and/or guideline is for organizations or departments that do not have one in place already or who want to modify their existing one. This serves as an example and can be used and edited as needed to meet organizational requirements.*

<b>Department:</b> Emergency Medicine	<b>Policy Description:</b> Telehealth Practice
<b>Page:</b> 1 of #	<b>Replaces Policy Dated:</b> Month, Day, Year
<b>Effective Date:</b> Month, Day, Year	<b>Reference Number:</b> ###
<b>Approved by:</b> [Name]	

<p><b>Definition:</b> Telehealth, sometimes referred to as telemedicine, is the use of electronic information and telecommunications technologies to extend care when the clinician and the patient are not in the same place at the same time. <a href="https://www.cms.gov/files/document/telehealth-toolkit-providers.pdf">https://www.cms.gov/files/document/telehealth-toolkit-providers.pdf</a></p>
<p><b>Purpose:</b> Telehealth provides clinicians, patients, and caregivers with timely access to specialists via real-time audio-video communication.</p>
<p><b>Policy:</b> Clinicians, patients, and caregivers in need of geriatric specialist consultation, as determined by the Emergency Medicine care provider can use telehealth for treatment planning, care coordination, education, and discharge planning.</p>
<p><b>Evaluation and Treatment of the Patient:</b> Treatment and consultation recommendations made in an online setting, including issuing a prescription via electronic means, will be held to the same standards of appropriate practice as those in traditional (encounter in person) settings.</p>
<p><b>Documentation:</b> The visit must be documented in the patient’s medical record at both the originating site (where the patient is) and the consultant site (where the consultant is).</p>
<p><b>Standard of Care:</b> Standards and scope of telemedicine should be consistent with in-person services. The same standard of care must be applied to both telemedicine and in-person services.</p>
<p><b>Consent:</b> Informed consent should be obtained from the patient or designee before beginning the use of Telehealth. During this process, providers should inform their patients regarding what to expect during the telehealth encounter.</p>
<p><b>Billing:</b> Inform patient that depending on their insurance, they may be billed for these services</p>
<p><b>Privacy:</b> Healthcare professionals providing telehealth services shall ensure privacy so provider discussion cannot be overheard by others outside of the room where the service is provided. If other people are in either the patient of the professional's room, both the professional and patient shall be made aware of the other person and agree to their presence.</p>
<p><b>Licensure and Credentialing:</b> Health Professionals providing telemedicine services must be licensed in the state where the patient receives services. Professionals shall conduct care consistent with the jurisdictional regulatory, licensing, credentialing and privileging, malpractice and insurance laws and rules for their profession in both the jurisdiction (site) in which they are practicing as well as the jurisdiction (site) where the patient is receiving care and shall ensure compliance as required by appropriate regulatory and accrediting agencies.</p>
<p><b>Prescribing:</b> The practitioner must act in accordance with applicable Federal and State law; is issued for a legitimate medical purpose by a practitioner acting in the usual course of his/her professional practice and the telemedicine communication is conducted using an audio-visual, real-time, two-way interactive communication system. <a href="https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/programs_campaigns/medication_assisted/dea-information-telemedicine.pdf">https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/programs_campaigns/medication_assisted/dea-information-telemedicine.pdf</a></p>
<p><b>Technology:</b> Modes of communication used by healthcare providers to interact with consulting site will comply with the originating site and consulting site’s HIPAA regulations and allow for verification of the individuals transmitting and receiving information.</p>

**Physician-patient relationship:** Physician-patient relationship is “clearly established” once the consulting site physician agrees to diagnose and treat the patient, and the patient agrees to be treated, whether or not an in-person encounter has occurred between the physician (or any other appropriately supervised health care practitioner) and patient. a valid patient-physician relationship must be established prior to providing telemedicine services.

**Education:** Health professionals providing telehealth services shall have the necessary education, training/orientation, licensure, and ongoing continuing education/professional development, in order to ensure the necessary knowledge and competencies for safe provision of quality health services in their specialty area.

## References:

1. Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services. Telehealth for Providers: What You Need to Know. <https://www.cms.gov/files/document/telehealth-toolkit-providers.pdf>
2. Federation of State Medical Boards: Model Policy for the Appropriate Use of Telemedicine Technologies in the Practice of Medicine. [https://www.fsmb.org/siteassets/advocacy/policies/fsmb\\_telemedicine\\_policy.pdf](https://www.fsmb.org/siteassets/advocacy/policies/fsmb_telemedicine_policy.pdf)
3. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration: DEA Information on Telemedicine. [https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/programs\\_campaigns/medication\\_assisted/dea-information-telemedicine.pdf](https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/programs_campaigns/medication_assisted/dea-information-telemedicine.pdf)