



**AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION**  
SERVICES, INC.

# Flexible telehealth policies temporarily extended after the public health emergency

The new federal Consolidated Appropriations Act ensures that Medicare patients can continue to access broadened telehealth services for at least five months after the COVID-19 public health emergency ends.

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Thanks to a recently enacted appropriations law, health care providers and Medicare patients will continue to have broad access to telehealth services for at least five months after the COVID-19 public health emergency (PHE) ends.

Since the beginning of the PHE, patients have benefited from health care policy changes that make it easier for providers to offer different types of telehealth services. Many of these changes, however, are dependent on the PHE declaration remaining active. In March, President Biden signed the Consolidated Appropriations Act 2022 (the Act), which extends many of the flexibilities for telehealth services in Medicare for 151 days after the ends. Currently, the PHE is set to expire on July 15, 2022.

APA, along with many other health care organizations, continues to advocate for legislation to make telehealth flexibilities permanent in Medicare and other federal programs.

Psychologists should be aware of the following telehealth extensions for the 151-day period after the PHE ends:

- An “originating site” will be defined as any site in the U.S. where an eligible telehealth individual is located when the service is furnished via telecommunications, including the individual’s home.
- The in-person requirements for mental health services furnished through telehealth will be delayed. The requirement that a patient be seen for an in-person visit within six months of an initial telehealth visit and a subsequent in-person visit at least every 12 months will not apply until the 152nd day after the PHE ends.
- Coverage and payment will continue for mental health services provided through audio-only technology.

Other changes to telehealth being implemented under the Act include:

- Qualified physical therapists, occupational therapists, speech-language pathologists, and audiologists will remain eligible to furnish telehealth services.
- Telehealth services will be available through Federally Qualified Health Centers and Rural Health Clinics.

- There will be no facility fees for new locations under the law's expanded definition of an originating site.
- The Medicare Payment Advisory Committee will conduct a study on the expansion of telehealth services and submit a report to Congress by June 15, 2023.

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