

A Social Work Guide to Telehealth in Tennessee

In Tennessee, telehealth practice (the use of electronic information and telecommunications technologies to support and promote long-distance clinical health care, patient and professional health-related education, public health and health administration) is subject to the same standards as traditional practice. **The social worker must comply with guidelines for the locations of the social worker and the client.** The social worker must accurately represent themselves and practice within their competencies. Informed consent must be expanded to address additional risks of using technology.

Please review the following:

NASW Code of Ethics with 2017 highlighted revisions regarding the use of technology in the provision of professional services: <https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics/Highlighted-Revisions-to-the-Code-of-Ethics>

NASW's Standards for Technology in Social Work Practice:

https://www.socialworkers.org/includes/newIncludes/homepage/PRA-BRO-33617.TechStandards_FINAL_POSTING.pdf

Tennessee Social Work Licensure Board Information on Technology Facilitated Services:

Telehealth can be provided if the client is in Tennessee. If the client is in another state the licensee will need to check the rules/laws of social work in that state. The responsibility lies within the state where the client is located. Please review [the Current Telehealth Code](#) for the State of Tennessee.

Technology facilitated supervision for LCSW/LAPSW candidates is currently allowed on a case-by-case basis. IF anyone were to **temporarily** want/need to use telehealth for supervision, licensure board staff highly recommends that they follow guidance provided to an a prior applicant in [“telehealth response letter”](#). When the applicant submits their LCSW or LAPSW application, they should include a written explanation with their logs explaining the necessity (COVID19) of at that time.

Risk Management: Treading Through Teletherapy Treatment Topics:

<https://naswassurance.org/malpractice/malpractice-tips/treading-through-teletherapy-treatment-topics/>

What Telehealth Platform to Use

NASW-TN does not endorse any telehealth platform. We do recommend that you do **not** use a non-HIPAA compliant platform. HIPAA compliance has been mirroring technological change. Ensuring that your platform is **HIPAA compliant** is critical so as to reduce your risk and to maintain patient privacy.

Insurance Coverage for Telehealth Services

Insurance coverage for teletherapy services is impacted by federal and state laws, as well as individual insurance company policies. Providers should check with their liability insurance and their patient's insurance plan regarding how telehealth services are covered.

Medicare

Medicare Part B (Medical Insurance) covers certain telehealth services. The Medicare enrollee will pay 20% of the Medicare-approved amount for the healthcare provider's services, and the Part B deductible applies. For most telehealth services, the Medicare enrollee will pay the same amount that they would if they got the services in person. Part B covers mental health services provided by LCSWs. .

Interstate Telehealth Services

The licensing board for a state has jurisdiction when a client is physically in their state, so that state's board decides if you are in compliance with their laws and rules when you work with someone who is inside their borders. Quite a few licensing boards have provisions for licensees of other states to practice temporarily with clients in their state. It is imperative to check the social work licensure rules in the state within which a potential client resides to determine if you are eligible to practice temporarily.

Useful Resources

1. <https://www.cchpca.org/telehealth-policy/current-state-laws-and-reimbursement-policies?jurisdiction=71&category=All&topic=All>
2. <https://personcenteredtech.com/2018/11/06/telemental-health-across-state-lines-doing-it-legally/>
3. <https://www.medicare.gov/coverage/telehealth>
4. <https://blog.evisit.com/telemedicine-informed-patient-consent-done-right-way>