Act Now! Congress is Considering COVID-19 Aid Packages

Urge Congress to Ensure that Medicare Reimburse for Mental and Behavioral Health Services Provided by Audio-Only Telehealth

Contact your Lawmakers

Congress is developing a third package of legislation responding to the COVID-19 epidemic. We need to make sure this includes a provision to enable Medicare to reimburse for telehealth that is provided by audio-only telephone (versus a smartphone with a video chat app).

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) recently broadened access to telehealth services under Medicare by allowing providers to use smartphones with video chat apps to provide services, to beneficiaries who are in their own home. This is an important step. However, many Medicare beneficiaries either don't have access to smartphones, don't know how to use video chat capability, or do not have adequate, reliable internet service to support video communications. With social distancing likely to be required for many weeks and months, and with research showing the severe adverse effects of social isolation and loneliness, Medicare beneficiaries need to be able to pick up a phone and connect easily with mental health providers. Please take a moment to contact your lawmakers.

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