

## Acute Care Hospital Knowledge and Skills for Telehealth Services



**Policy:** It is the policy of [Organization name here] to ensure that all staff possess the knowledge and skills needed to provide safe and quality health care services to qualified beneficiaries in a HIPAA-compliant environment.

**Purpose:** To explain the knowledge and skills needed for the provision of telehealth services, from a Medicare Rules and Regulations perspective.

**Scope:** This document is applicable for acute care hospitals (ACH), in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). Each organization should check their state regulations for further requirements and opportunities.

### *Temporary PHE Guidance\**

*“CMS is waiving 482.12(f)(3) related to Emergency services, with respect to the surge facility(ies) only, such that written policies and procedures for staff to use when evaluating emergencies are not required for surge facilities. This removes the burden on facilities to develop and establish additional policies and procedures at their surge facilities or surge sites related to the assessment, initial treatment and referral of patients. These flexibilities should be implemented so long as they are not inconsistent with a state’s emergency preparedness or pandemic plan.”*

*“CMS is waiving the requirement at 42 CFR 482.57(b)(1) that hospitals designate in writing the personnel qualified to perform specific respiratory care procedures and the amount of supervision required for personnel to carry out specific procedures. These flexibilities should be implemented so long as they are not inconsistent with a State or pandemic/emergency plan.”*

*“To the extent NCDs and LCDs require a specific practitioner type or physician specialty to furnish or supervise a service, during this PHE, the Chief Medical Officer or equivalent of a hospital or facility will have the authority to make those staffing decisions.”*

*For further reading: <https://www.cms.gov/files/document/omh-rural-crosswalk.pdf>*

\*Temporary guidance related to Public Health Emergency (PHE)

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**Procedures: Knowledge and Skills of Telehealth Services and Practice.**

- A. Physicians and Practitioners must have the knowledge and skills to provide telehealth services and/or consult with distant site providers.
  1. Physician and Practitioner knowledge of providing telehealth services must include:
    - a) Knowledge of federal and state telehealth rules and regulations of HIPAA and telehealth, as well as telehealth-specific documentation. (**[Link to ACH Site Requirements, Documentation, and Technology policies](#)**)
    - b) Knowledge of patient telehealth education, to include explaining to the patient the purpose of usage of technology during the consultation. (**[Link to ACH Consent, Site Requirements, and Technology policies](#)**)
    - c) Knowledge of data collection and evaluation of telehealth performance improvement initiatives.
    - d) Knowledge of how to access IT support.
    - e) Knowledge of the most appropriate platform and workflow based on the type of consultation to be performed (phone, video visit or e-consult). (**[Link to ACH Site Requirements policy](#)**)
  2. Physician and Practitioner skills for providing telehealth services must include:
    - a) The ability to access and operate technology, to include video equipment and examination camera, computer/tablet/Smartphone, microphone, and other peripherals as indicated/needed (i.e., electronic stethoscope, otoscope, etc.).
- B. Nursing Personnel must have the knowledge and skills to provide telehealth services.
  1. Nursing Personnel knowledge of providing telehealth services must include:
    - a) Knowledge of federal and state telehealth rules and regulations, HIPAA and telehealth, as well as telehealth-specific documentation. (**[Link to ACH Site Requirements, Technology, and Documentation policies](#)**)
    - b) Knowledge of setting-up the space for a telehealth consultation. (**[Link to ACH Site Requirements policy](#)**)
    - c) Knowledge of patient telehealth education, to include explaining to patient the purposed and usage of technology during the consultation. (**[Link to ACH Consent, Site Requirements, and Technology policies](#)**)
    - d) Knowledge of data collection and evaluation of telehealth performance improvement initiatives.
    - e) Knowledge of how to access IT support.
  2. Nursing Personnel skills for providing telehealth services must include:
    - a) The ability to access and operate technology, to include setting up video equipment and examination camera, microphone, and other peripherals as indicated/needed (i.e., electronic stethoscope, etc.).  
[https://www.gptrac.org/file\\_download/inline/a1531fee-c873-434b-975a-f544d21ac72a](https://www.gptrac.org/file_download/inline/a1531fee-c873-434b-975a-f544d21ac72a)

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- C. Administrative Personnel, such as health unit clerks, must have the knowledge and skills to support the use of telehealth services.
  1. Administrative personnel knowledge of telehealth services must include:
    - a) Knowledge of HIPAA and telehealth services. ([Link to ACH Technology policy](#))
    - b) Knowledge of phone etiquette and scheduling appointments with the distant consultant.
    - c) Knowledge of confirming the appropriate portal link to be used to connect with the distant consultant.
    - d) Knowledge of how to access IT support.
  2. Administrative personnel skills for the support of telehealth services must include:
    - a) The ability to use a computer, software, and the phone.

***Tips:***

- *Ensure the organization's clinical educator is familiar with telehealth-specific knowledge and skills.*
- *Telehealth-specific knowledge and skills should be integrated into the staff members' orientation, competency checklist and renewed annually.*

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