



# PRIORITY ISSUE

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## ABOUT CMSA

Case managers are recognized experts and vital participants in the care coordination team who empower people to understand and access quality, efficient health care. The mission of CMSA is to advocate for patients' wellbeing and improved health outcomes through fostering case management growth and development, impacting health care policy and providing evidence-based tools and resources.

## CMSA ROLE IN TELEHEALTH

Telehealth is defined as the use of electronic information and telecommunications technologies to support long-distance clinical health care, patient and professional health-related education, public health, and health administration.

During the recent pandemic, changes in the way that health care was delivered were needed to reduce staff exposure to ill persons, preserve personal protective equipment (PPE), and minimize the impact of patient surges on facilities.

Healthcare systems have adjusted the way they triage, evaluate, and care for patients using methods that do not rely on in-person services. Telehealth services helped provide necessary care to patients while minimizing the transmission risk of Covid -19 healthcare personnel and patients.

While telehealth technology and its use are not new, widespread adoption among healthcare personnel and patients beyond simple telephone correspondence has been relatively slow. However, recent policy changes during the pandemic have reduced barriers to telehealth access and have promoted the use of telehealth to deliver acute, chronic, primary and specialty care.

Telehealth services can:

- Can reduce the strain on healthcare systems by minimizing the surge of patient demand on facilities.
- Maintaining continuity of care to the extent possible to avoid additional negative consequences from delayed preventive, chronic, or routine care.
- Remote access to healthcare services may increase participation for those who are medically or socially vulnerable or who do not have ready access to providers.
- Improve access to primary care providers and specialists, including mental and behavioral health, for chronic health conditions and medication management.
- Provide coaching and support for patients managing chronic health conditions, including weight management and nutrition counseling.
- Monitor clinical signs of certain chronic medical conditions (e.g., blood pressure, blood glucose, other remote assessments).

- Engage in case management for patients who have difficulty accessing care (e.g., those who live in very rural settings, older adults, those with limited mobility).
- Provide follow up with patients after hospitalization.
- Deliver advance care planning and counseling to patients and caregivers to document preferences if a life-threatening event or medical crisis occur non-emergent care to residents in long-term care facilities.
- Communicate with insurers/payers to understand availability of covered telehealth, telemedicine, or nurse advice line services.
- Provide outreach to patients with limited technology and connectivity and offer flexibility in platforms that can be used for video consultation, or non-video options, when possible.

The Public Policy Committee of CMSA supports both state and federal legislation around telehealth and will work collaboratively with other disciplines to understand individual federal and state regulations, restrictions, temporary mandates and directives, and expiration dates and to monitor for updated regulatory actions for healthcare systems and healthcare providers.

We further support:

- Expansion of the use of telehealth beyond the pandemic to continue beyond the current deadline to be a permanent alternative to office visits to improve access to care.
- Many Veterans utilize telehealth to be able to have access to VA physicians. This needs to be expanded to Veterans everywhere.
- Expansion of the Nurse Licensure Compact to facilitate the coordination of patient care across state lines and to expand patient care based on this technology.
- Advocate for expansion of the role of CM in Telehealth to be reimbursed if not already covered.
- Advocate that Telehealth technology be user friendly so patients will use it.

#### KEYWORDS

*telehealth, telemedicine, case management and telehealth, psycho-social, population health, long-distance clinical healthcare, chronic disease management, chronic care management, health care coaching, social determinants of health, improved health outcomes, value-based care, access to care, healthcare advocacy, telehealth innovation, NLC, health equity and disparity, VA telehealth, VA system telehealth program*