



Greetings Northwest Region:

2023

Happy New Year!

COVID-19 Telehealth Flexibilities Extended

The NRTRC is excited to get back to work providing technical assistance and telehealth support in 2023.

2022 was an exciting year that saw quite a bit of growth and support for telehealth and digital healthcare services.

Most exciting is that on Dec. 29, President Biden signed the [H.R. 2617: Fiscal Year 2023 Consolidated Appropriations Act](#) which extends COVID-19 Medicare telehealth flexibilities until Dec. 31, 2024. HR2617 extends the telehealth flexibilities that were passed in the budget bill for FY22 that included the 151-day extension at the end of the public health emergency. These flexibilities include:

- Temporary suspension of the geographic site requirement.
- Allowing the home as an eligible originating site.
- Allowing providers, such as FQHCs and RHCs, to continue to be eligible telehealth providers.
- Removing facility fees for patients receiving telemedicine services in their homes.
- Delaying the in-person visit requirement before a patient may be eligible for telemental health services.
- Allowing the continued use of audio-only telehealth services.

PHE Update: The public health emergency has been formally extended through April 11, 2023. The Biden Administration stated early in 2022 that they would give states a 60-day notification of when the PHE is scheduled to come to an end. We can assume that if the PHE will be coming to an end, there should be notification around Feb 11, 2023.

2023 Physician Fee Schedule: Check out this [fact sheet](#) on CMS's final 2023 Physician Fee Schedule rule. The policies went into effect January 1, 2023.

TeleBehavioral Health 301 is Now LIVE

The third in the series of [TeleBehavioral Health training](#) focuses on developing a broad knowledge base and skill set for providing services to people who live with mental health and substance use issues.

[TeleBehavioral Health 301](#) explores leveraging telebehavioral health to enhance quality of care in a variety of clinical arenas.

Learners are not required to take the series sequentially, nor are learners required to take all of the sessions in the series in order to obtain continuing education credits or a certificate of completion.



NRTRC on YouTube



NRTRC's 2022 Annual Telehealth Conference video sessions are free to view. If you were unable to attend, or want to watch your favorite keynote and concurrent session again, visit [NRTRC's YouTube](#) page.



News You Can Use

[Assessing Telehealth Through the Lens of the Provider: Considerations for the Post-COVID-19 Era](#). Telemedicine and e-Health. December 2022.

[Primary Care Appointment Completion Rates and Telemedicine Utilization Among Black and Non-Black Patients from 2019 to 2020](#). Telemedicine and e-Health. December 2022. The three main finding in this article are:

- Racial disparities in primary care appointment completion rates between black and non-black patients narrowed substantially during the shutdown period and this narrowing persisted for the remainder of 2020.
- Telemedicine appointments, especially audio only, represented a larger share of completed primary care appointments in 2020 for Black patients relative to non-Black patients.

- Although the types of conditions managed by primary care shifted during the shutdown, conditions managed for the remainder of 2020 mirrored those from the prior year, suggesting that the observed appointment completion rates were not explained by major shifts in diagnoses managed by primary care providers.

[New & Expanded Flexibilities for Rural Health Clinics and Federally Qualified Health Centers during the COVID-19 PHE](#) was updated on November 22, 2022 to include:

- Effective Jan. 1, 2023, the payment rate for distant site telehealth services is \$95.88, slightly decreased from the 2022 rate of \$97.24.
- Effective Jan. 1 – Dec. 31, 2023, we'll pay the new rate of \$23.14 for claims submitted with G0071 — slightly decreased from the 2022 rate of \$23.88. Note the expansion of Virtual Communication Services payment for virtual communication services now includes online digital E/M services.

[Geospatial Analysis of Access to Health Care and Internet Services in the US](#). JAMA. November 2022

[Audio-Only Telemedicine In Primary Care: Embraced In The NHS, Second Rate In The US](#). Health Affairs. 2022.12.05. Succinct and interesting comparison of the key factors contributing to broad use of audio-only telemedicine in the UK in contrast to its use in the US.



Upcoming Events & Webinars

[School Health Services Provided Via Telehealth: Where Are We Now?:](#) With the COVID-19 pandemic, many schools and School-based Health Centers transitioned to telehealth services as a strategy for meeting student health needs when school campuses were closed. With improved technology, internet access, and a recognition of the importance of school-based health, telehealth has emerged as an opportunity to serve students more widely and equitably. The California School-Based Health Alliance will provide an overview of school health services in the state, focusing on current and aspirational telehealth provisions. They will discuss key models, strengths and possible pitfalls, and recommendations. Jan. 17 at 11:00 a.m. MST

[NCTRC Webinar — Telehealth Policy in 2023:](#) Mei Kwong, Executive Director at the Center for Connected Health Policy, the federally designated national telehealth policy resource center, will review current federal telehealth policy, what to expect in 2023 and what may happen in telehealth policy as the year progresses. Jan. 18 at noon MST.

[Developing a Telemedicine Program:](#) This conference is intended to give a broad

overview of a variety of telemedicine topics including:

- Clinical services
- Telecommunications and infrastructure development/operations
- Distance education
- Evaluation
- Business aspects
- Equipment demonstration

Feb. 6 at 9 a.m. MST

[RPM Event: Learn, Engage, Advance:](#) The mission of this event is to provide education on real-world RPM practice and foster a network of peers for shared learning. For more information and/or to see the full agenda visit CalTRC.org/events. This is a private event, vendors are not permitted to attend. Registration is required for all participants. Feb. 9 at 11 a.m. MST

Conferences to Look at for 2023



ATA2023 Conference & Expo

March 4-6, 2023 | San Antonio, TX

*From **Now What?** to **How To!***
The Vision and Realities of Telehealth Adoption

GoTelehealth.org 

At ATA2023, discover and learn from industry-leading speakers, innovators and frontline providers focused on creating the right systems, providing the right training and developing the right tools to entrench telehealth – once and for all – in our healthcare lexicon.

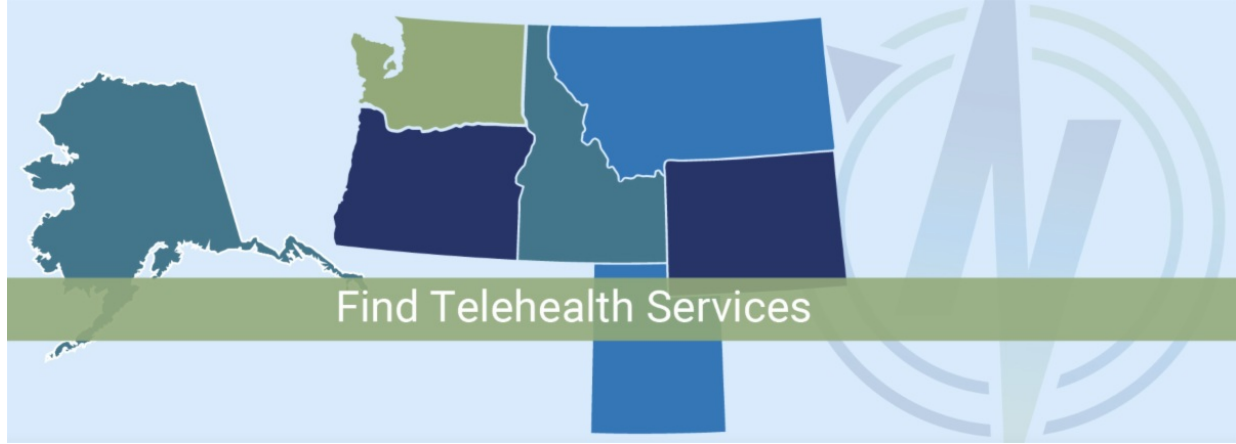
[ATA 2023:](#) The American Telehealth Association's annual conference puts telehealth in its place within a hybrid care delivery model. ATA2023 can help you build an immersive program, with visionary keynotes, thought-provoking fireside chats with C-suite leaders, and interactive sessions to advance your knowledge. March 4–6 in San Antonio, Texas.

Qualify for a \$300 discount with the [registration link](#) and passcode NRTRC.

[HIMSS 2023:](#) HIMSS23 unites thought leaders, disruptors and change makers representing every sector across the global health information and technology spectrum. Join peers and experts to develop, strengthen and learn from the relationship of health and technology. Continue your journey to better global health during this unique conference experience. April 17–21 in Chicago.

[NRHA 2023:](#) Join the National Rural Health Association and rural health leaders from across the country to help raise the standard for rural health with more than 80 innovative, practical and cost-saving sessions. May 16-19 in San Diego.

[APHA 2023:](#) The American Public Health Association will hold its annual meeting and expo , Nov. 12–15 in Atlanta.



Do you provide health care or services via telehealth?

- NRTRC's [telehealth services finder](#) is available to help patients and providers find in-person and telehealth care. Please review your clinic's information or complete the [2022 intake form](#) to ensure that information on your practice and your services is up-to-date. [Click here to update the information on your practice.](#)



Northwest Regional State Telehealth Website Links

- [Alaska Collaborative for Telehealth and Telemedicine](#)
- [Idaho Department of Health and Welfare](#)
- [Montana Telehealth Alliance](#)
- [Telehealth Alliance of Oregon](#)
- [Utah Telehealth Network](#)
- [Washington State Telehealth Collaborative](#)
- [Washington State Department of Health](#)
- [Wyoming Telehealth Network](#)



Telehealth Resources

- [Telehealth Tools and Resources](#): Find up-to-date telehealth tools & resources.

- [Professional Development](#): Visit NRTRC's catalog of online telehealth training courses.
- The Telehealth Resource Centers have gathered resources specific to [Federally Qualified Health Centers](#). Examples include a [Critical Access Hospital Telehealth Guide](#) and a webinar on Telehealth Essentials for FQHCs.
- [Emergency Declarations](#): Utah is the only state in the Northwest Region still under an emergency declaration due to the COVID pandemic. It is set to expire when the PHE expires.
- [Updated legislation and regulations](#): Keep up with regulations and proposed legislation for the states of the Northwest Region.
- [Research](#): current research opportunities, research articles and survey results.

Grant Funding Opportunities

- Refer to the [funding page](#) on the NRTRC website for updated grant opportunities.



Telehealth Triumphs:

In December 2022, [Great Plains Telehealth Resource and Assistance Center](#) (gpTRAC) received a technical assistance request from Dr. Fred Ness, medical director for the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe in South Dakota.

The inquiry asked for information on tribal telehealth development and implementation that the CRST tribe could use in developing its program.



Because the question was related to a tribal organization, gpTRAC reached out to the team at the Northwest Regional Telehealth Resource Center and asked if NRTRC could make an introduction to Anthony Torres, special project manager and network administrator of the Utah Navajo Health System. Torres had spoken at the National Consortiums Telehealth Resource Center's Spring 2022 meeting in Park City, Utah, hosted by NRTRC, about the remarkable telehealth program developed for the Utah Navajo Health System.

Within only a few hours of the request, Torres and Verlyn Hawks, of the Utah Navajo Health System, responded to NRTRC's request, provided gpTRAC with an abundance of information about the Navajo tribal telehealth program, and offered assistance.

The medical director for the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe said the information received from the Utah Navajo Health System was helpful and insightful.

Affordable Connectivity Program

Helping Households Get
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Northwest Regional Telehealth Resource Center

"This publication was made possible by grant number U1UTH42531-01 from the Office for the Advancement of Telehealth, Health Resources and Services Administration, DHHS"

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