



Greetings Northwest Region:

National Rural Health Day

Celebrating the **Power of Rural!**®



THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2024

Join the National Organization of State Offices of Rural Health (NOSORH) on November 21 at 2 p.m. ET for an engaging live webinar celebrating National Rural Health Day! This year's event spotlights the transformative impact of the Rural Communities Opioid Response Program (RCORP), featuring powerful success stories and innovative strategies from grantees and key partners. Discover how these community-driven approaches can be adapted to drive lasting change in your own community. Don't miss this opportunity to be part of the conversation and help move the Power of Rural forward!

[Register](#)

Telehealth News

2025 Physician Fee Schedule Released

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) has released the [CY 2025 Physician Fee Schedule](#) (CY 25 PFS). The following list summarizes telehealth services under the PFS as shared from the [CMS Fact Sheet](#):

- **Expansion of Telehealth Services:** CMS has finalized the inclusion of several new services in the Medicare Telehealth Services List for 2025, including caregiver training and PrEP counseling.
- **Flexibility in Audio-Only Communication:** CMS will allow audio-only telecommunication for certain home-based telehealth services if the patient cannot or does not wish to use video technology.
- **Direct Supervision via Telehealth:** CMS has permanently allowed virtual direct supervision by a physician or practitioner for specific services, enabling supervising practitioners to oversee services remotely through real-time audio-visual communication.
- **Virtual Presence of Teaching Physicians:** Through the end of 2025, teaching physicians can continue to use a virtual presence to supervise residents in clinical training settings during telehealth visits.
- **Reinstatement of Pre-Pandemic Limitations:** Starting January 1, 2025, most of the pre-COVID-19 restrictions on Medicare telehealth services, such as geographic and practitioner limitations, will return unless Congress acts to lift them.

Health and Human Services (HHS) Recommends Additional Oversight of RPM Services for Medicare

In a recent [report](#), the [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Inspector General \(OIG\)](#) examined the use of remote patient monitoring (RPM) in Medicare. RPM allows health data to be collected and transmitted from a patient's home, helping providers manage conditions remotely. The OIG found that RPM usage among Medicare patients has surged in recent years. They also reviewed federal policies governing this telehealth service. To ensure proper use and billing, the OIG has recommended additional oversight of RPM services within the Medicare program.



Broadband Fact Sheet from the National Consortium of Telehealth Resource Centers

Reliable and affordable internet access is essential for consumers and patients needing digital health resources. This [Consumer Broadband Fact Sheet | National Consortium of Telehealth Resource Centers](#) provides an overview to help consumers understand broadband internet and its role in digital health, defining broadband, digital health, how to access broadband speed and how to access digital health without internet access.

Telehealth as Effective as In-Person Care for Patients Seeking Palliative Care

One of the largest randomized clinical trials to directly compare telehealth and in-person care has found that they are equally effective in improving quality of life in patients seeking palliative care—specialized care focused on managing the symptoms of serious illness. Here is a [link](#) to the full study published in JAMA, or read the article [here](#).

Regional Telehealth News

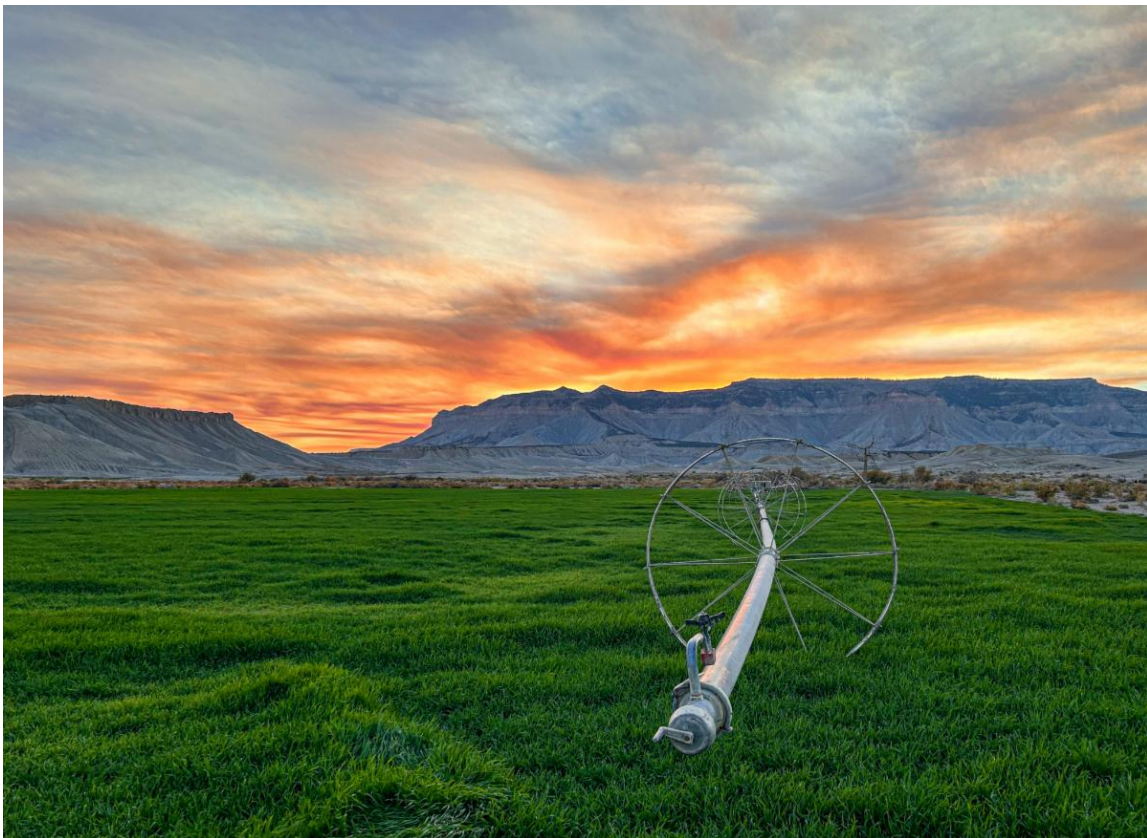


Photo by Eric R. Johansen

Utah's Rural Hospitals Are Recognized: Blue Mountain Hospital and Uintah Basin Medical Center

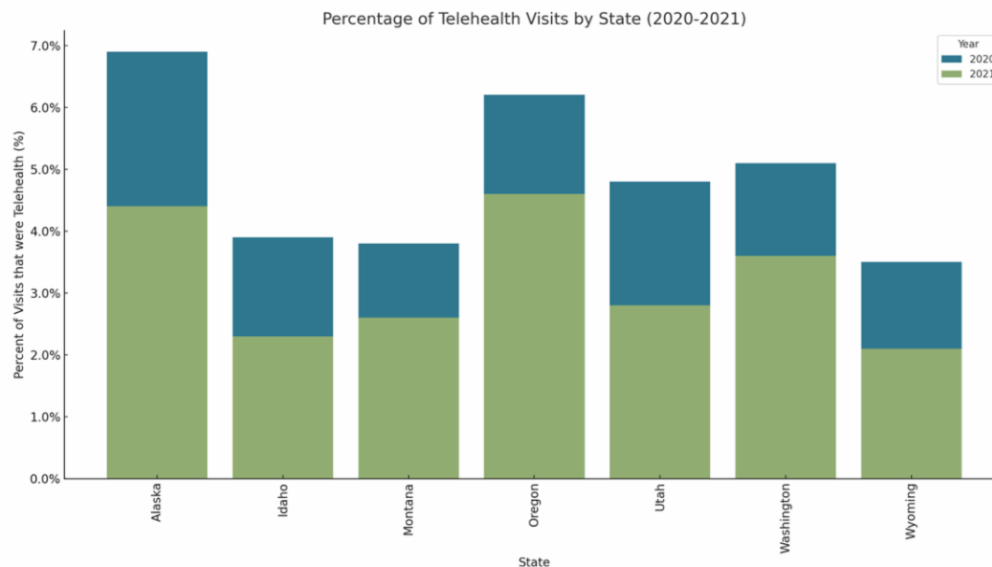
In celebration of National Rural Health Day, NOSORH invites you to join a

dynamic panel discussion featuring leaders from the Utah State Office of Rural Health, Uintah Basin Medical Center, and Blue Mountain Hospital. This webinar will explore real-world success stories of how these Utah-based healthcare organizations leveraged combined federal funding to enhance financial performance and improve quality data outcomes in rural healthcare settings.

The virtual discussion will be held on November 19 at 3 p.m. (ET). Attendance is free but registration is required. Register [here](#).

2020-2021 Northwest Region Percentage of Telehealth Visits by State

NRTRC staff pulled the data in the following chart from the [Medicare Telehealth Trends Dashboard](#), which was launched by the Office of the [Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation](#) (ASPE). The dashboard includes aggregated Medicare Fee For Service (FFS) claims from 2019 to 2021 by state and visit type; we encourage readers to access the dashboard for additional information, including interactive features and a wealth of data. If the data is updated for 2022-2023, we will disseminate that information when it is released.



Get to Know NRTRC Board Members: Rose Locklear

A shout-out to Oregon's NRTRC Advisory Board Member Rose Locklear (she/her). Rose is Manager for Oregon Health Science University's (OHSU) Office of Digital Health (ODH), supporting synchronous telehealth, video and telephone workflow, and digital health navigation. Rose has been serving as an NRTRC Board Member for Oregon since

2017 and is a past chair and vice-chair. Prior to joining the ODH, Rose supported the Oregon legislature's mandate to "coordinate statewide efforts for providing healthcare in rural areas" at the Oregon Office of Rural Health. As a Program Manager, she developed and managed telehealth and IT projects to improve rural hospital and clinic capacity in policy implementation, finance and operations, and population health.

Rose recognizes telehealth as a healthcare modality that expands access while reducing inefficiencies (long travel and wait times). Having spent most of her life in Oregon, she appreciates the diverse geography and ability to get from the coast to the desert in hours. She has lived in nearly every region of Oregon and currently resides in Central Oregon.

She enjoys hot yoga, trail running and other outdoor adventures, traveling, and spending time with friends and family.



Events to Bookmark in 2024

November

2024 Rural Health Association of Utah Annual Conference

Nov 13–Nov 14

St. George, UT

Organizer: [Rural Health Association of Utah](#)

The Rural Health Association of Utah Conference is an annual event dedicated to promoting and improving rural healthcare in Utah. Join us for two days of insightful discussions, networking opportunities, and knowledge sharing. The 2024 Annual Rural Health Association of Utah Conference is on Nov 13–14 in beautiful St. George, Utah. The theme of this year's conference is Cultivating Healthier Lives in

NRTRC Webinar—CISA Services: Federal Cybersecurity Resources for Telehealth

Nov 14 @ 12 p.m.–1 p.m.

Organizer: [Northwest Regional Telehealth Resource Center](#)

This presentation will introduce the Department of Homeland Security's Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), the Health Sector Coordinating Council, and the joint CISA/HHS Cybersecurity Toolkit. We'll cover cybersecurity resources available to telehealth providers, including vulnerability scanning, cyber risk assessments, and training at no cost.

TeleBehavioral Health 501: Working with Interpreters via Telehealth

Nov 15 @ 12 p.m.–1 p.m.

Organizer: [University of Washington Behavioral Health Institute](#)

TeleBehavioral Health 501 is a free-to-attend 12-part webinar series open to anyone providing services to individuals who live with mental health and substance use issues. This Zoom-based series takes place the third Friday of each month, January through December 2024. You are invited to attend all webinars, but you will need to register separately for each.

ATA Insights Summit: Virtual Nursing

Nov 17–Nov 20

Arlington, TX

Organizer: [American Telemedicine Association](#)

Debuted in 2023 with remarkable success, the Insights Summit on Virtual Nursing equips attendees with the tools, connections, and frameworks to elevate their virtual nursing programs.



This year's highlights include the following:

- Comprehensive Integration: Move beyond quick fixes and learn how to seamlessly integrate virtual nursing into your practice.
- Change Management: Master the strategies to drive effective change across your organization.
- Key Performance Measures: Identify the most critical metrics to ensure your program's success.

How Federal Funds Are Being Used to Support Rural Communities

Nov 19 @ 1 p.m.–2 p.m.

Organizer: [National Organization of State Offices Of Rural Health](#)

This webinar features a panel discussion that includes the Utah State Office of Rural Health, Uintah Basin Medical Center, a rural hospital, and Blue Mountain Hospital, a critical access hospital. The panelists will share their experiences with leveraging combined federal funding to improve financial performance and enhance quality data outcomes in rural healthcare settings.

Leveraging Telehealth Technologies To Improve Access in Rural Areas

Nov 20 @ 11 a.m.–12 p.m.

Organizer: [University of Mississippi Medical Center](#)

This webinar will explore:

- How telehealth services support rural hospitals and community providers by expanding access to critical care, reducing transfer rates, and improving clinical outcomes
- How RPM technologies enable proactive care management and improve outcomes for patients in rural and underserved communities
- How AI-powered scribing tools allow healthcare providers to focus more on patient care

National Rural Health Day

Nov 21

Organizer: [National Organization of State Offices Of Rural Health](#)

Since 2011, the National Organization of State Offices of Rural Health (NOSORH) has set aside the third Thursday of November to celebrate the “Power of Rural” on National Rural Health Day (NRHD). This day is an opportunity to bring attention to and honor the incredible efforts of rural healthcare providers, communities, organizations, State Offices of Rural Health, and other stakeholders dedicated to addressing the unique healthcare needs of rural America.

Rural communities are wonderful places to live and work, which is why nearly 61 million people call them home. These small towns, farming communities, and frontier areas are places where neighbors know each other, listen to each other, respect each other, and work together to benefit the greater good. They are also some of the best places to start a business and test your “entrepreneurial spirit.” These communities are an economic engine that provides the rest of the country with a wealth of services and commodities.

To learn more about National Rural Health Day and the Power of Rural, visit powerofrural.org.

Telehealth T-Time

Nov 21 @ 9 a.m.–12 p.m.

Organizer: [Ingenium Health Advisors](#)

This month's Telehealth T-Time on November 21, 2024 is an in-patient telehealth event featuring three presentations:

- "From Adoption to Integration: The Strategic Evolution of Telehealth in Healthcare Systems"
- "Bridging Healthcare Gaps: The Role of Telemedicine in Modern Hospitals"
- "How Virtual Care Partners are Expanding Access and Improving Economics at Health Systems"

The Power of Rural in Action: RCORP Success Stories & Strategies

Nov 21 @ 12 p.m.–1 p.m.

Organizer: [National Organization of State Offices Of Rural Health](#)

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December

ATA EDGE Policy Conference

Dec 11–Dec 13

Washington, DC

Organizer: [American Telemedicine Association](#)

The American Telemedicine Association is the only organization that addresses telehealth policy from all angles—state and federal legislative priorities and issues that affect our industry—as well as international policy perspectives and the trends and opportunities to advance telehealth as a permanent option for care delivery.

Transforming Nursing Care with Virtual Care Delivery: A Comprehensive Approach

Dec 12 @ 11 a.m.–12 p.m.

Organizer: [American Telemedicine Association](#)

Join us for a 60-minute webinar hosted by hellocare, featuring industry leaders discussing the transformative power of virtual nursing. Discover the latest trends and innovations in virtual nursing technology through an engaging case study that highlights the challenges and successes of implementing a virtual nurse model.

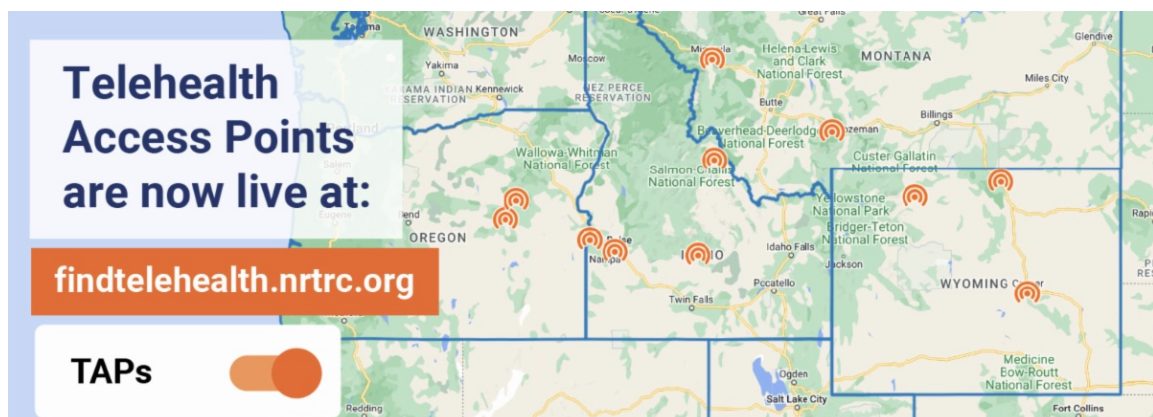
TeleBehavioral Health 501: Diving Deeper into Facilitating Virtual Groups

Dec 13 @ 12 p.m.–1 p.m.

Organizer: [University of Washington Behavioral Health Institute](#)

TeleBehavioral Health 501 is a free-to-attend 12-part webinar series open to anyone providing services to individuals who live with mental health and substance use issues. This Zoom-based series takes place the third Friday of each month, January through December 2024. You are invited to attend all webinars, but you will need to register separately for each.

Do You Provide Healthcare or Services via Telehealth?



NRTRC's [Find Telehealth](#) is available to help patients and providers find in-person and telehealth care along with locations to have telehealth visits. TAPs can be viewed by turning on the TAPs button on the map.

[Click Here to Update Information on Your Practice](#)
[Click Here to Add a TAP](#)



Northwest Regional State Telehealth Website Links

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



Telehealth Resources

- [Telehealth Tools and Resources](#): Find up-to-date telehealth tools and resources.
- [Professional Development](#): Visit NRTRC's catalog of online telehealth training courses.
- [Updated legislation and regulations](#): Keep up with regulations and proposed legislation for the states of the Northwest Region.
- [Research](#): Find current research opportunities, research articles, and survey results.

Grant Funding Opportunities

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



Northwest Regional Telehealth Resource Center

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Northwest Regional Telehealth Resource Center
101 Wasatch Drive | Salt Lake City, UT 84112 US

www.nrtrc.org | Phone [\(801\)587-0349](tel:8015870349) | Toll Free [\(833\) 747-0643](tel:8337470643)

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