

# CONNECT for Health Act of 2021

Senators Schatz (D-HI), Wicker (R-MS), Cardin (D-MD), Thune (R-SD), Warner (D-VA), & Hyde-Smith (R-MS)

**The CONNECT for Health Act of 2021 promotes higher quality of care, increased access to care, and reduced spending in Medicare through the expansion of telehealth services.**

- Numerous studies on telehealth – the use of telecommunications technologies to furnish health care services remotely and in real-time – have shown benefits for quality of care, access to care, and reduced spending.<sup>1</sup>
- Telehealth increases access to care in areas with workforce shortages and for individuals who live far away from health care facilities, have limited mobility or transportation, or have other barriers to accessing care.
- However, current statutory restrictions – such as geographic and originating site requirements that only permit beneficiaries to receive telehealth services if they are in certain rural areas and at certain clinical sites – create barriers to coverage that limit the use of telehealth in Medicare.
- Many of these restrictions have been waived during the COVID-19 pandemic to increase access to telehealth services for Medicare beneficiaries during the public health emergency.

**The CONNECT for Health Act of 2021 would expand access to telehealth services on a permanent basis, support health care providers and beneficiaries in utilizing telehealth, enhance telehealth oversight, and gather more data on the impact of telehealth.**

## Summary of the CONNECT for Health Act of 2021

Sec. 1 – Table of contents. Sec. 2 – Findings and sense of Congress.

### ***Title I – Removing Barriers to Telehealth Coverage***

Sec. 101 – Provides the HHS Secretary authority to waive telehealth restrictions.

Sec. 102 – Removes geographic restrictions for telehealth services permanently.

Sec. 103 – Expands originating sites to include the home and other appropriate sites.

Sec. 104 – Removes restrictions for emergency medical care services.

Sec. 105 – Requires CMS' process to add telehealth services to better consider how telehealth can improve access to care and allows for the temporary coverage of certain telehealth services to generate evidence of clinical benefit.

Sec. 106 – Permanently allows Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) and Rural Health Clinics (RHCs) to furnish telehealth services as distant site providers.

Sec. 107 – Removes restrictions for facilities of the Indian Health Service and Native Hawaiian Health Care Systems.

Sec. 108 – Permanently allows for the waiver of telehealth restrictions during public health emergencies.

Sec. 109 – Allows for the use of telehealth in the recertification of a beneficiary for the hospice benefit.

### ***Title II – Program Integrity***

Sec. 201 – Clarifies that the provision of technologies to a Medicare beneficiary for the purpose of telehealth services is not considered “remuneration” under fraud and abuse laws.

Sec. 202 – Provides additional resources to the HHS Office of Inspector General for telehealth oversight activities.

Sec. 203 – Requires additional provider and beneficiary education on telehealth, including to support underserved and high-risk populations in utilizing telehealth services.

### ***Title III – Data and Testing of Models***

Sec. 301 – Requires a study on telehealth utilization during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sec. 302 – Requires an analysis of the impact of telehealth waivers in CMS Innovation Center models.

Sec. 303 – Authorizes a model to test allowing additional health professionals to furnish telehealth services.

Sec. 304 – Encourages the CMS Innovation Center to test telehealth models in Medicare.

<sup>1</sup> For example: [https://www.cchpca.org/sites/default/files/2018-09/HRSA\\_Cost\\_Efficiency\\_Studies.pdf](https://www.cchpca.org/sites/default/files/2018-09/HRSA_Cost_Efficiency_Studies.pdf).

## The CONNECT for Health Act Is Endorsed By More Than 150 Organizations

AARP  
ACT | The App Association  
agilon health  
Alliance for Aging Research  
Alzheimer's Foundation of America  
AMDA Society for Post-Acute and Long-Term Care Medicine  
America's Essential Hospitals  
American Academy of Dermatology Association  
American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine  
American Academy of Neurology  
American Academy of Pediatrics  
American Academy of Sleep Medicine  
American Association for Psychoanalysis in Clinical Social Work  
American Association for Respiratory Care  
American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases  
American Association of Diabetes Educators  
American Association of Neurological Surgeons  
American Association of Nurse Practitioners  
American Board of Quality Assurance and Utilization Review Physicians  
American Clinical Neurophysiology Society  
American College of Emergency Physicians  
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists  
American College of Preventive Medicine  
American Health Quality Association  
American Heart Association  
American Hospital Association  
American Lung Association  
American Medical Association  
American Medical Group Association  
American Medical Rehabilitation Providers Association  
American Nurses Association  
American Occupational Therapy Association  
American Osteopathic Association  
American Physical Therapy Association  
American Speech-Language-Hearing Association  
American Telemedicine Association  
American Urological Association  
Americans for Prosperity  
Anxiety and Depression Association of America  
Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness  
Association for Clinical Oncology  
Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations  
Athenahealth  
Atrius Health  
Cancer Support Community  
Center for Telehealth and e-Health Law  
Cerner  
Child Neurology Foundation  
Children's Health Fund  
Children's National Hospital  
Cleveland Clinic Health System  
College of Healthcare Information Management Executives (CHIME)  
College of Psychiatric and Neurologic Pharmacists  
Congress of Neurological Surgeons  
Connected Health Initiative  
Connected Home Living  
Consumer Technology Association  
Doctor on Demand  
Duke Health  
Eating Disorders Coalition for Research, Policy & Action  
eHealth Initiative  
Electronic Health Record Association  
Encounter Telehealth  
Endocrine Society  
ExamMed  
Federation of American Hospitals  
Gateway Health Plan  
Global Alliance for Behavioral Health and Social Justice  
Global Partnership for Telehealth  
GO2 Foundation for Lung Cancer  
Greater New York Hospital Association  
Hackensack Meridian Health  
Health Care Transformation Task Force  
Health Innovation Alliance  
Healthcare Association of Hawaii  
Healthcare Leadership Council  
HIMSS  
InHome Healthcare Services  
innovaTel Telepsychiatry  
Intel  
International OCD Foundation  
Invitae  
Kaiser Permanente  
Lanai Community Health Center  
LeadingAge  
LeadingAge Center for Aging Services Technologies  
Leukemia & Lymphoma Society  
Lincare  
Lutheran Services in America  
Masimo  
Medical Group Management Association  
Michigan Medicine  
Mom Congress and 2020 Mom  
NAADAC, the Association for Addiction Professionals  
National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)  
National Association for Children's Behavioral Health  
National Association for Healthcare Quality  
National Association for Home Care & Hospice  
National Association for Rural Mental Health  
National Association for the Support of Long Term Care  
National Association of Community Health Centers  
National Association of County Behavioral Health & Developmental Disability Directors  
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners  
National Association of Rural Health Clinics  
National Coalition on Health Care  
National Council for Hospice and Palliative Care  
National Council of State Boards of Nursing  
National Federation of Families  
National Health Care for the Homeless Council  
National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization  
National League for Nursing  
National MS Society  
National Organization for Rare Disorders  
National Psoriasis Foundation  
National Register of Health Service Psychologists  
National Rural Health Association  
NCART  
Nemours Children's Health System  
NMHM - No Health without Mental Health  
Northwell Health  
NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association  
OCHIN  
Ochsner Health System  
Oncology Nursing Society  
Partnership to Advance Virtual Care  
Personal Connected Health Alliance  
Philips  
Providence Health  
Pulmonary Hypertension Association  
PursueCare  
REDC Consortium  
Remote Cardiac Services Provider Group  
Renal Physicians Association  
Society of General Internal Medicine  
Teladoc Health  
Telecommunications Industry Association (TIA)  
Texas Health Information Management Association  
The MAVEN Project  
The Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research  
TouchPointCare  
Tourette Association of America  
Transformational Healthcare Initiative  
Treatment Communities of America  
U.S. COPD Coalition  
United Spinal Association  
University of Hawaii System  
University of Mississippi Medical Center, Center for Telehealth  
UPMC Health System  
UVA Health  
Wisconsin Hospital Association