CONNECT for Health Act of 2023

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 2023 would permanently expand access to telehealth services ensuring that Medicare beneficiaries can continue to receive essential care.

- Telehealth utilization surged in 2020 when CMS waived many statutory restrictions on telehealth to ensure continued access to health care during the public health emergency.
- Recent reports find that older adults and individuals from underserved communities benefited the most from expanded telehealth access.¹
- Since 2021, Medicare beneficiaries' telehealth utilization has stabilized at 15 percent², while overall health care use is level, indicating that telehealth often substitutes in-person care.³
- With telehealth flexibilities set to expire at the end of 2024, beneficiaries will lose access to care due to statutory restrictions, including requirements that only permit beneficiaries to receive telehealth services if they are in rural areas and at certain clinical sites.
- Permanent changes to Medicare's coverage of telehealth services are critical in order to protect access to care and fully integrate telehealth into care delivery.

The CONNECT for Health Act of 2023 would expand access to telehealth on a permanent basis, enhance oversight, and support health care providers and beneficiaries in utilizing telehealth.

Summary of the CONNECT for Health Act of 2023

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

Title I – Removing Barriers to Telehealth Coverage

- Sec. 101 Permanently removes geographic requirements for telehealth services.
- Sec. 102 Expands originating sites to include the patient's home and other clinically appropriate sites.
- Sec. 103 Expands the authority for practitioners eligible to furnish telehealth services.
- Sec. 104 Improves Medicare's process to add telehealth services.
- Sec. 105 Permanently allows Federally Qualified Health Centers and Rural Health Clinics to furnish telehealth services as distant site providers.
- Sec. 106 Removes restrictions for facilities of the Indian Health Service and Native Hawaiian Health Care.
- Sec. 107 Repeals the six-month in-person visit requirement for telemental health services.
- Sec. 108 Permanently allows for the waiver of telehealth restrictions during public health emergencies.
- Sec. 109 Permanently allows for the use of telehealth in the recertification of a beneficiary for hospice.

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.

Sec. 203 – Addresses significant outlier billing patterns for telehealth services⁴ through provider notification and technical assistance.

Title III – Beneficiary and Provider Supports, Quality of Care, and Data

- Sec. 301 Provides additional resources and study to improve beneficiary engagement in telehealth.
- Sec. 302 Provides resources and training on telehealth for health care professionals.
- Sec. 303 Ensures the inclusion of telehealth in measuring quality of care.
- Sec. 304 Requires CMS to publish detailed information on utilization of telehealth services quarterly.

¹ https://oig.hhs.gov/oei/reports/OEI-02-20-00522.pdf

² https://data.cms.gov/sites/default/files/2023-03/Medicare%20Telehealth%20Trends%20Snapshot%2020230308_508.pdf

³ https://oig.hhs.gov/oei/reports/OEI-02-20-00520.pdf

⁴ https://oig.hhs.gov/oei/reports/OEI-02-20-00720.pdf

The CONNECT for Health Act Is Endorsed By 150+ Organizations

AARP

Academy of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology ACT | The App Association Adventist Health Policy Association ADVION Alliance for Aging Research Alliance for Connected Care Alliance of Community Health Plans Alliance of Wound Care Stakeholders ALS Association Amazon AMDA Society for Post-Acute and Long-Term Care Medicine America's Essential Hospitals American Academy of Audiology American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine American Academy of Neurology American Academy of PAs American Academy of Pediatrics American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation American Academy of Sleep Medicine American Association for Psychoanalysis in Clinical Social Work American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases American Association of Hip & Knee Surgeons 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 Clinical Pharmacy American College of Emergency Physicians American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists American College of Physicians American College of Preventive Medicine American Council of the Blind American Group Psychotherapy Association American Heart Association American Lung Association American Medical Association American Medical Group Association American Medical Rehabilitation Providers Association American Nurses Association American Orthotic and Prosthetic Association American Psychiatric Association American Psychological Association American Society of Hematology American Society of Pediatric Nephrology American Telemedicine Association ATA Action American Urological Association Americans for Prosperity & Concerned Veterans for America Anxiety and Depression Association of America Ascension Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness Association for Clinical Oncology Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations Association of Diabetes Care and Education Specialists Association of Language Companies Athenahealth Cadence Center for Telehealth and e-Health I aw Centerstone Children's Health Fund CICONIX, LLC College of Healthcare Information Management Executives (CHIME) Congress of Neurological Surgeons Connected Health Initiative Connected Home Living Consumer Technology Association Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance Digital Health Equitable Health Alliance Duke Health Eating Disorders Coalition for Research, Policy & Action Encounter Telehealth Endocrine Society ExamMed Federation of American Hospitals Global Alliance for Behavioral Health and Social Justice 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 HIMSS Electronic Health Record Association Hospital for Special Surgery Included Health InHome Healthcare Services Intel International OCD Foundation Invitae Jewish Federations of North America Kaiser Permanente LeadingAge Lincare Lutheran Services in America Masimo Medical Group Management Association Melanoma Research Foundation Michigan Medicine Mom Congress Muscular Dystrophy Association NAADAC, the Association for Addiction Professionals National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) National Association for Home Care & Hospice National Association of Community Health Centers National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners National Association of Rural Health Clinics National Council for Hospice and Palliative Care National Council for Mental Wellbeing National Council of State Boards of Nursing National Federation of Families National Health Care for the Homeless Council National Health IT Collaborative for the Underserved National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization National Immigration Law Center National League for Nursing National MS Society National Organization for Rare Disorders National Partnership for Healthcare and Hospice Innovation National Psoriasis Foundation National Quality Forum National Register of Health Service Psychologists National Rural Health Association Nemours Children's Health System Network of Jewish Human Services Agencies NMHM - No Health without Mental Health NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association OCHIN Ochsner Health System Oliver Wyman Health Innovation Center **Oncology Nursing Society** Partnership to Advance Virtual Care Philips Policy Center for Maternal Mental Health Providence Health Public Health Institute Pulmonary Hypertension Association PursueCare Quartet Health **REDC Consortium** Renal Physicians Association Schizophrenia & Psychosis Action Alliance Society of General Internal Medicine Society of Thoracic Surgeons Susan G. Komen Teladoc Health Telecommunications Industry Association (TIA) Telehealth Equity Coalition The ERISA Industry Committee Third Way Tourette Association of America United Spinal Association University of Hawaii System University of Mississippi Medical Center, Center for Telehealth USofCare UVA Health Vizient Wisconsin Hospital Association