

# 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.<sup>1</sup>
- Since 2021, Medicare beneficiaries' telehealth utilization has stabilized at 15 percent<sup>2</sup>, while overall health care use is level, indicating that telehealth often substitutes in-person care.<sup>3</sup>
- 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 services<sup>4</sup> 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.

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

<sup>2</sup> [https://data.cms.gov/sites/default/files/2023-03/Medicare%20Telehealth%20Trends%20Snapshot%2020230308\\_508.pdf](https://data.cms.gov/sites/default/files/2023-03/Medicare%20Telehealth%20Trends%20Snapshot%2020230308_508.pdf)

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

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

## The CONNECT for Health Act Is Endorsed By 160+ Organizations

AAHomecare  
AARP  
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 Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology  
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 Law  
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  
Cystic Fibrosis Foundation  
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  
Highmark Wholecare  
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  
LifePoint  
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 Healthcare Quality  
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 Association of Social Workers  
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  
Pandemic Patients  
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