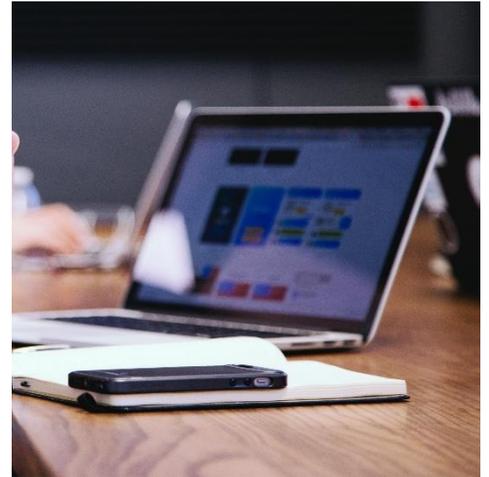


## Telehealth 101

As an interim measure in response to the Governor's declaration of a public health emergency as the result of the outbreak of COVID-19 (coronavirus), the Department of Social Services (DSS) has temporarily expanded **portions** of telemedicine coverage effective for dates of service from March 13, 2020 until the Department has notified providers in writing that the state has deemed COVID-19 no longer to be a public health emergency. A listing of all Policy Transmittals and links, regarding Telemedicine coverage, can be accessed in the COVID-19 Information and FAQs document on [www.ctdssmap.com](http://www.ctdssmap.com) and on the [Provider Bulletins](#) page of the CT BHP website.



So now what? As a provider, the transition to telehealth can be an unsettling option for both you and the members you serve; it can impact your practice as well as the mental health of your clients. Many of your clients are wisely limiting their travel and contact with others, and thus may be reluctant to come to your office for appointments. Your clients may need some reassurance that social distancing does not have to mean a reduction in the quantity and/or quality of their mental health and substance abuse sessions. Here at the CT BHP we are here to help you and offer some pointers to increase the quality of sessions during this transitional time:

- Notify your existing and potential new clients that you are now offering telehealth.
  - **Send out an email blast.** If you have an email list be sure to let them know the good news. In your email, list the benefits of your online therapy sessions (such as convenience, no break in current sessions). You may even decide to link to a landing page on your website with a full write-up of the benefits.
  - **Add it to your email signature or website (if applicable).** Let everyone you email know that you're offering telehealth services now and add telehealth to the list of services on your website.
  - **Let us know!** Feel free to contact the Provider Relations Department at [ctbhp@beaconhealthoptions.com](mailto:ctbhp@beaconhealthoptions.com) and let us know that you are providing telehealth services. We will update the clinical specialties on your provider file for referral purposes.

- Inform clients of what can be expected during these sessions and how to access the session (call-in number, or meeting link depending on what communication platform you're using) Be able to explain how the technology and process is going to work.
- Distractions can increase when the environment shifts to an in-home setting. Remind clients of the importance of confidentiality during the session (no recording), as well as being in a safe and quiet environment (not driving, not in a cafe, etc).
- If you are using a camera during the sessions adjust your seating so that your facial expressions are easily seen and suggest that your client sit close to the camera, as well.
- Though it is a difficult habit to establish, try to look at the camera rather than directly at the screen. Looking at the screen may appear to your client like you are looking down or avoiding eye contact, which can unconsciously dilute your client's sense that you are "present" in the session.
- If you are only using only an audible device during these sessions make sure both you and your client can be heard easily by speaking directly into the microphone/telephone and limiting any additional background noise.
- Remember to document telehealth services as you would in-person sessions. Providers need to follow all standing rules and regulations. For example, be sure to document start and end times, proper clinical notes/documentation of session, etc.