

Expanded Telehealth Access Act—H.R.3875/S.2880

Discussion Points for Your Meeting

- Occupational therapy practitioners (OTPs) were permitted by Congress and CMS to provide services via telehealth to Medicare beneficiaries during the public health emergency (PHE) through a waiver. The current waiver expires December 2024.
- CMS does NOT have the authority to make OTPs permanent telehealth providers, so **OT via telehealth will end for Medicare beneficiaries unless Congress acts by December 31, 2024.**
- Since the waivers began, we have seen that OT telehealth services are **especially helpful for people in rural and other underserved areas** and to those who travel to receive services was already a barrier to access, including people with disabilities.
- **Telehealth “video home visits” are an OT telehealth intervention that cannot be duplicated in an office setting.** Being able to see a client’s living area by video lets us identify home safety issues that would never be identified in an office setting. This can be crucial in preventing falls, addressing functional decline, and avoiding costly emergency room visits and hospital admissions.
- Occupational therapy practitioners report that **telehealth has enabled Medicare beneficiaries to reduce delays in the start of care**, fewer cancellations and postponements, and some treatment to be completed with fewer visits, which can reduce the cost of care.
- **Representatives Mikie Sherrill (NJ) and Diana Harshbarger (TN) have introduced H.R.3875 and Senators Steve Daines (MT) and Tina Smith (MN) have introduced S.2880 to enable Medicare beneficiaries to continue to receive OT services via telehealth** by making occupational therapy practitioners as permanent telehealth providers.

Your Ask:

- 1. Please co-sponsor the Expanded Telehealth Access Act (H.R.3875/S.2880) to permanently establish OTPs at Medicare telehealth providers.**
- 2. If Congress does not act on telehealth permanence this year, please extend waivers that allow OTPs to continue as Medicare telehealth providers before year-end.** AOTA supports waiver extensions that have been passed by the House Ways and Means Committee and Energy and Commerce Health Subcommittee.