

# NEW JERSEY MUST PROTECT ACCESS TO TELEHEALTH AND PUT NJ PATIENTS FIRST

## SUPPORT TELEHEALTH PARITY

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**Telehealth has become an essential part of the healthcare infrastructure in New Jersey, connecting patients with their personal providers when it meets the appropriate standard of care. On December 31, 2023, the access to telehealth services New Jersey residents have become accustomed to will sunset if no action is taken by the New Jersey Legislature this year.**

In 2021, the Legislature and Governor Murphy appropriately authorized the continuation of telehealth services relied upon throughout the COVID-19 pandemic ensuring that health care providers would receive equitable payment to provide telehealth services for physical and behavioral health. The 2-year extension authorized telehealth services to be paid at the same rate as an in-person visit and also included key patient-protection telehealth reforms not originally included in the 2017 law authorizing telehealth in New Jersey.

The 2021 law required the NJ Department of Health to study the impact of equitable payment for telehealth services over its 2-year authorization, however that report remains outstanding beyond its Spring 2023 deadline.

Patient access to telehealth and equitable payment for telehealth services should not be interrupted while the Legislature is waiting for a study.

**The Legislature must act to protect patient access to telehealth services by December 31, 2023.**

Many patients delay or go without care simply because they cannot access it where and when they need it, whether due to transportation or childcare challenges, lost income due to taking off work, or the stigma of seeking behavioral health care. Telehealth reduces these access barriers that exacerbate healthcare disparities, while decreasing missed appointments, improving health outcomes, establishing greater communication and relationships with their personal providers, and ultimately saving patients and the state money in the long-term.

We know that the continuation of pay parity will:

- Provide patients with greater opportunity to access their own personal, NJ-based providers through telehealth rather than seeking care from one-off encounters with national telehealth organizations where there is no continuity of care or personal relationship between the patient and provider.
- Allow healthcare professionals the latitude to work with their patients and use all available and appropriate technologies to deliver telehealth when they meet the standard of care, including audio-only technologies.
- Provide clarity on reimbursement rates and equitable payments for providers to continue to offer this model of care.

New Jersey must protect patient access to telehealth services and adopt the continuation of pay parity prior to its December 31, 2023 sunset.

*American Academy of Family Physicians - NJ Chapter*

*New Jersey Association for Marriage and Family Therapy*

*American College of Physicians-NJ Chapter*

*New Jersey Association of Mental Health and Addiction Agencies*

*Coalition of Mental Health Consumer Organizations*

*New Jersey Association of Osteopathic Physicians & Surgeons*

*Collaborative Support Programs of New Jersey*

*New Jersey Obstetrical & Gynecological Society*

*Community Health Law Project*

*New Jersey Orthopaedic Society*

*Fair Share Hospitals Collaborative*

*New Jersey Podiatric Medical Society*

*Medical Society of New Jersey*

*New Jersey Psychiatric Association*

*Mental Health Association in New Jersey*

*New Jersey Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association*

*Mental Health Association of Essex and Morris*

*New Jersey Psychological Association*

*National Alliance on Mental Health NJ*

*New Jersey State Society of Anesthesiologists*

*National Association of Social Workers - NJ Chapter*

*Supportive Housing Association of New Jersey*

*New Jersey Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics*

