

About the Idaho Telehealth Council

The 2014 Idaho Legislature passed House Concurrent Resolution 46, directing the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare to convene the Idaho Telehealth Council. The Council is committed to the advancement of telehealth in Idaho and will coordinate and develop a comprehensive set of standards, policies, rules, and procedures for the use of telehealth and telemedicine in Idaho.

What is Telehealth?

Telehealth is a mode of delivering health care services that uses information and communication technologies to enable the diagnosis, consultation, treatment, education, care management, and self-management of patients at a distance from health providers.

What is Telemedicine?

Telemedicine is the use of medical information exchanged from one site to another via electronic communications to improve a patient's health status.

Why Telehealth in Idaho?

Thirty five of Idaho's 44 counties are classified as rural or frontier, meaning many Idaho residents experience difficulty accessing health care services in their communities in a timely manner. Telehealth enables patients to receive critical health care services from qualified providers, without having to travel long distances from their home communities, keeping care closer to home.

Telehealth plays a vital role as Idaho strives to achieve the triple aim to improve quality of care, population health, and affordability of healthcare.

Guiding Principles

The Council operates with transparency, is realistic, and upholds the following principles:

- Support patient centeredness.
- Enhance access to care and quality of care.
- Promote cost effectiveness and be evidence-based.
- Align with already established standards.
- Sustain patient privacy and patient consent.

Key Goals

The Council developed a proposed work plan in May 2015, and identified four key goals to accomplish the Council's Charter.

Goal 1

- Examine reimbursement policies in Idaho and determine telemedicine payment models that support the triple aim.

Goal 2

- Develop roadmap to operationalize and expand telehealth services in State Healthcare Innovation Plan (SHIP) patient-centered medical homes (PCMH) and Community Health Emergency Medical Services (CHEMS) programs.

Goal 3

- Act in advisory capacity to regulatory boards and state agencies proposing rules and regulations specific to the use of telemedicine by healthcare providers.

2015 Legislative Achievement

Idaho Telehealth Access Act

The Council developed and passed the Idaho Telehealth Access Act (HB189) during the 2015 legislature.

- Patient-provider relationships can be established without an in-person visit using two-way audio and video and maintained using electronic communications.
- Prescription drug orders can be issued using telehealth services with some parameters.
- Increases access to healthcare and enables providers to deliver safe and high quality care.
- Supports multi-disciplinary collaboration such as patient-centered medical homes.
- Decreases healthcare fragmentation; increases continuity of care.

Goal 4

- Support educational clinical practice statewide using telemedicine technology to increase coordination and standardization.