March 18, 2020

Pennsylvania Authorizes Licensed Health Care Professionals to Provide Services via Telemedicine During Coronavirus Emergency

In order to increase the number of health care practitioners available to respond to the COVID-19 emergency and to ensure continuity of patient care and services, Governor Wolf has granted the Department of State's request to allow health care professionals licensed under any of the Department of State's Bureau of Professional and Occupational Affairs (BPOA) licensing boards to provide services to patients via telemedicine during the coronavirus emergency.

For all licensing-related inquiries, please use the email addresses found here: Board Contact Info

Health Care Practitioners Currently Licensed In PA

Currently no Pennsylvania statute authorizes or prohibits the practice of telemedicine.

Due to the COVID-19 emergency, the Department requested authority to issue guidance to licensees under any of BPOA's health-licensing boards **permitting** them to provide services via telemedicine when appropriate.

Those boards are:

- Chiropractic
- Dentistry
- Medicine
- Nursing
- Optometry
- Pharmacy
- Podiatry
- Psychology
- Osteopathic Medicine
- Nursing Home Administrators
- Occupational Therapy Education and Licensure
- Physical Therapy
- Social Workers, Marriage and Family Therapists, and Professional Counselors
- Examiners in Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology
- Veterinary Medicine

Health Care Practitioners Licensed in Other States, but Not Licensed in PA

- There is a significant need for certain health care professionals to physically travel to Pennsylvania to assist in the emergency effort, but also a substantial need for practitioners licensed outside Pennsylvania to provide services via telemedicine.
- Waiver request: The Department requested authorization from the Governor to allow licensed practitioners in other states to provide services to Pennsylvanians via the use of telemedicine for the duration of the emergency without obtaining a Pennsylvania license. This request was approved by the Governor if the practitioner meets the following requirements:
    - They are licensed and in good standing in their home state, territory or country.
    - They must provide the Board they would normally seek licensure in with the following information prior to practicing telemedicine with Pennsylvanians:
        - The practitioner's full name, home or work mailing address, telephone number where they can be reached, and an email address.
        - Identify the practitioner's license type (e.g., "physician and surgeon," "registered nurse," etc.), any license number or other identifying information that is unique to that practitioner's license, and the identify the state or other governmental body that issued the license.
- Further details on submission method of the information above will be provided on the BPOA website.

Other Guidance

- The Department of State will provide references on telemedicine issued by other Commonwealth agencies in any communications or postings/pages on this issue, for ease of access for all practitioners.
- All practitioners using telemedicine are advised to remain informed on any and all federal and state laws, regulations and guidance regarding telemedicine, including but not limited to a practitioner's obligations under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and recent guidance provided for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, which can be found here: https://www.hhs.gov/hipaa/for-professionals/special-topics/emergency-preparedness/notification-enforcement-discretion-telehealth/index.html
- Authorization to engage in telemedicine from a professional licensing standpoint is separate and apart from any insurance coverage/payment issues that fall under the Department of Health, the Department of Human Services, the Department of Insurance, or any other state or federal agency.