



Office for the Advancement of Telehealth Telehealth Network Grant Program (TNGP) Monthly e-Blast

We are sending out our first e-blast of 2021 a little bit early, so that you have it in advance of the holidays. Wishing you a safe and happy holiday season and a great start to the new year.

- Your TNGP Technical Assistance Team

Program-Specific Updates

Telehealth Network Grant Program (TNGP) Webinars - Recordings Available!

The slides and recordings from two recent TNGP webinars have been posted to the grantee website (www.ruralhealthlink.org). The webinars are:

- [Policy Updates and Research from HRSA Telehealth Resource Centers \(Dec. 3\)](#)
- [Engaging Stakeholders to Build Sustainable Telehealth Networks \(Dec. 17\)](#)

You may find the materials directly on the TNGP page. Feel free to share with any key staff or partners that were not able to attend.

[Office for the Advancement of Telehealth \(OAT\) Grantee Directory](#)

The OAT Grantee Directory is now available and been shared with all grantees in the TNGP cohort. It is also posted [online](#). The final compiled OAT Grantee Directory document provides a brief snapshot of each of the TNGP grantees in the cohort, along with other OAT-funded grant programs. We encourage you to use this resource to learn about and make connections with other grantees in your program and across OAT.

Year 1 PIMS Baseline Reporting

A reminder that Year 1 PIMS baseline reporting concludes on Dec.31, 2020. If you have any issues or concerns related to this deadline, please contact your HRSA TNGP project officer. The PIMS Data Dictionary along with PIMS Navigation Manual are both available on the grantee site (www.ruralhealthlink.org).

TNGP Communities of Practice Calls

The next round of calls is scheduled to start in mid-February 2021. These groups will meet quarterly and will be driven by the interests and needs of those participating in each group. If you are interested in joining a group but not yet involved with one, please reach out to your technical assistance provider. Be on the lookout soon for a calendar announcement for the next Communities of Practice calls.

Resource and Other Updates

[Final Policy, Payment, and Quality Provisions Changes to the Medicare Physician Fee Schedule for Calendar Year 2021](#)

The fact sheet highlights final provisions to the Center for Medicare & Medicaid Services' (CMS') Calendar Year 2021 Physician Fee Schedule. Provisions concerning telehealth include the creation of a third category that describes services added to the Medicare telehealth list during the COVID-19 pandemic public health emergency. CMS also clarifies licensed clinical social workers, clinical psychologists, physical therapists, occupational therapists, and speech-language pathologists' ability to furnish brief online assessments and management services. Additionally, CMS addresses concerns around telehealth restrictions when a beneficiary and provider are in the same location and

finalizes payment policies related to Remote Physiologic Monitoring Services.

[HHS Expands COVID-19 Telehealth Capabilities in Public Readiness and Emergency Preparation \(PREP\) Act Amendment](#)

The article provides insight into the fourth amendment to the Declaration under the PREP Act. Specifically, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services will allow health care providers to use telehealth in any state to administer covered countermeasures against COVID-19 such as diagnostic tests. The amendment is an effort to address barriers to telehealth expansion and increase access to critical services via telehealth.

[Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security \(CARES\) Act Supports Online Resources for Professional Licensure](#)

Under the CARES Act, the Association of State and Provincial Psychology Board (ASPPB) received grant funding to support the Licensure Portability Grantee Program in preventing, preparing for and responding to COVID-19, including through telehealth access and infrastructure. Created by ASPPB, the Multi-Discipline Licensure Resource Project website provides information and resources related to state licensure requirements, licensure compacts, verifying licensure, and licensure during COVID-19 for occupational therapists, physical therapists, psychologists, and social workers.

[The Future of State Telehealth Policy](#)

The white paper, drafted by the National Governors Association's Center for Best Practices, summarizes state and federal telehealth policy flexibilities that were implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, the 27-page document provides long-term considerations for governors concerning the impact of these telehealth policy flexibilities on health care delivery and payment, as well as on the appropriateness of these policies post COVID-19.

[Rural Challenges, Strategies, and Recommendations to Advance Value-Based Payment and Care During and Beyond the COVID-19 Crisis](#)

The brief, drafted by the Delta Center for a Thriving Safety Net, highlights key challenges and concerns for rural providers in the ambulatory safety net setting, including the intensified need to address telehealth challenges. Additionally, the authors provide strategies to address these challenges and concerns, such as state-level strategies to keep and enhance the current advantages of telehealth.

[Evaluating Telehealth Adoption and Related Barriers Among Hospitals Located in Rurals and Urban Areas](#)

The article published in the Journal of Rural Health discusses a study in which the authors assessed telehealth adoption among hospitals located in rural and urban areas. Additionally, the authors identify barriers related to enhanced telehealth capacities specifically in the areas of patient engagement and health information exchange capacity with external providers and community partners.

Resource and Other Updates



ATA EDGE Policy Conference

Jan. 12, 19, 26, and Feb. 2, 2021 from 12:00-2:00 p.m. ET

The American Telemedicine Association EDGE Conference will focus on the latest state and federal telehealth policies and temporary waivers put in place in response to COVID-19, and the strategies to make access to telehealth permanently available following the public health emergency. This four-week series of two-hour sessions will convene thought leaders, policymakers, and pundits to discuss post-election perspectives, explore the implications for telehealth, and highlight the modalities that can bridge the gap for vulnerable populations, rural communities, and deliver quality care when and where it's needed.

[Learn More](#)



Medicare Telehealth: An Updated Overview

Jan. 19, 2021 from 12:00-1:00 p.m. CT

The Center for Optimizing Rural Health is hosting a webinar focused on the updates related to telehealth under Medicare. Emily Yoder, analyst for CMS is the guest speaker.

[Learn More](#)



National Rural Health Association's (NRHA's) Rural Health Policy Institute

Feb. 9-11, 2021 Washington, D.C.

Join NRHA's 32nd Annual Rural Health Policy Institute and guide the future of rural health policy with NRHA leadership. This institute offers the opportunity to advocate issues you care about with new and returning members of Congress and the administration.

[Learn More](#)



AcademyHealth 2021 Health Datapalooza and National Health Policy Conference

Feb. 16-18, 2021 Virtual

Health data and policy innovation are an integral part of all efforts to transform health care. Recognizing the consequential relationship that exists between health data and health policy advancements, AcademyHealth is virtually convening the two communities to share their work, exchange ideas, collaborate, and tackle the most critical health issues facing the country today.

[Learn More](#)



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