

Telehealth

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Telehealth is an amazing area of advancement for providers to be able to deliver and access communities and individuals who due to distance would not have the ability to receive treatment, or care. Telehealth uses technology which allows us to reach those underserved and sometimes neglected populations of Hoosiers in our rural areas. Telehealth has taken on many forms with the wide spread use of laptops, tablets and cell phones which have given unprecedented access to all Hoosiers with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities anytime, anywhere.

This is why I believe it is the perfect time for Indiana to reexamine its Waivers and add telehealth as an acceptable tool to accomplish the goals of serving Hoosiers with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities for Waiver providers. When examining the areas of need on the Waiver the Wellness program and our Behavioral Management services are where telehealth can be of immediate assistance. In addition, by allowing this tool it would provide no additional cost to the State of Indiana but would allow Providers to break down the barriers that have long existed for rural Hoosiers.

The National Association of Medicaid Directors (NAMd) recent report on “Medicaid Moving Ahead in Uncertain Times, Results from a 50-State Medicaid Budget Survey for State Fiscal year 2017 and 2018” which demonstrates how many, States are experimenting with different telehealth programs right now. “Interest in telehealth has grown across both public and commercial payers as a way to expand access to care, create greater convenience for patients, improve the quality of care, and reduce the costs of care. There are various types of telehealth services including: medical care/consultation between a patient at home and a distant clinician or between a patient in the presence of a clinician and a distant clinician; consultations between two clinicians without the patient present; remote monitoring of a patient at home or in a hospital or other facility; and secure electronic transfer of patient information (e.g., an image or lab results) to a clinician.”⁵⁹ In the report it outlines how 19 different States are implementing different initiatives surrounding telehealth. One example in the report is how Florida and Maryland are adding and encouraging remote consumer monitoring and distant service delivery methods.

Therefore the recommendation for the Task Force is to adopt that telehealth be approved as a viable and approved service delivery method for Behavior Management and Wellness Care as an allowable activity.