



CCSM Issues Subcommittee
Telehealth
Revised First Draft 9 9 2020

The Issue:

Telehealth has been inconsistent across the State and varies greatly within provider agencies. We feel that video telehealth is an important tool to offer for appointments, especially in the areas of mental health. Per MaineCare rule, video should be the top option and phone should only be used if no other resource is available. We often hear that people get phone calls and not the option of video due to either consumer/provider lack of technology or due to the provider preference. For example, within the same agency counseling is offered by video, and medication management appointments are only offered via phone. Clients' needs should be considered first and foremost.

Recommendations:

1. All providers should be offering their clients the option of HIPPA compliant video conferencing first and the clients should decide if that is what they want versus the provider deciding for the client.
2. We absolutely need to make sure that all peers have equal opportunity to access technology.
3. When possible, people should be given the choice to use technology rather than being forced to go into the office which is based on office policy. There needs to be a focus on the person's needs and safety first and foremost!
4. If providers are on video, they need to be seen and not keep their cameras off. This can create mistrust for the person.
5. Telehealth needs to be considered as part of our continuum of care as we move towards post Covid-19. It really is a great resource for people who lack access to transportation and live far away from service centers. It saves time, money, protects the environment and dramatically reduces the no-show rate for providers. This is a win/win for everyone!
6. DHHS should work with all providers to provide technical assistance when and if needed to make sure that everyone has access to telehealth options no matter which provider they use.



7. DHHS should work with all providers, nonprofit organizations and adult education providers to provide free training for their clients on how to use technology.
8. We recommend that Maine 211 have a live chat feature that could be another resource for people who may be struggling with access to information and technology.

Please note: Individuals should have the option of in person if that is what they choose. We are not saying that telehealth is perfect choice for everyone all the time.

Expected Outcomes:

Telehealth needs to be a viable alternative for every consumer/peer in the State of Maine. Working together, telehealth provides huge savings, quality client care and a more efficient system for all!

We would like to hear from you:

To submit feedback or a personal story relating to this issue, please send to the CCSM either by mail at: 219 Capitol St. Suite 7 Augusta, ME 04330 or email at vmccarty@maineccsm.org

DEADLINE TO RESPOND: November 12, 2020

Thank you