

CONNECT for Health Act of 2023

Senators Schatz (D-HI), Wicker (R-MS), Cardin (D-MD), Thune (R-SD), Warner (D-VA), & Hyde-Smith (R-MS)

The CONNECT for Health Act of 2023 would permanently expand access to telehealth services—ensuring that Medicare beneficiaries can continue to receive essential care.

- Telehealth utilization surged in 2020 when CMS waived many statutory restrictions on telehealth to ensure continued access to health care during the public health emergency.
- Recent reports find that older adults and individuals from underserved communities benefited the most from expanded telehealth access.¹
- Since 2021, Medicare beneficiaries' telehealth utilization has stabilized at 15 percent², while overall health care use is level, indicating that telehealth often substitutes in-person care.³
- With telehealth flexibilities set to expire at the end of 2024, beneficiaries will lose access to care due to statutory restrictions, including requirements that only permit beneficiaries to receive telehealth services if they are in rural areas and at certain clinical sites.
- Permanent changes to Medicare's coverage of telehealth services are critical in order to protect access to care and fully integrate telehealth into care delivery.

The CONNECT for Health Act of 2023 would expand access to telehealth on a permanent basis, enhance oversight, and support health care providers and beneficiaries in utilizing telehealth.

Summary of the CONNECT for Health Act of 2023

Sec. 1 – Table of contents. Sec. 2 – Findings and sense of Congress.

Title I – Removing Barriers to Telehealth Coverage

Sec. 101 – Permanently removes geographic requirements for telehealth services.

Sec. 102 – Expands originating sites to include the patient's home and other clinically appropriate sites.

Sec. 103 – Expands the authority for practitioners eligible to furnish telehealth services.

Sec. 104 – Improves Medicare's process to add telehealth services.

Sec. 105 – Permanently allows Federally Qualified Health Centers and Rural Health Clinics to furnish telehealth services as distant site providers.

Sec. 106 – Removes restrictions for facilities of the Indian Health Service and Native Hawaiian Health Care.

Sec. 107 – Repeals the six-month in-person visit requirement for telemental health services.

Sec. 108 – Permanently allows for the waiver of telehealth restrictions during public health emergencies.

Sec. 109 – Permanently allows for the use of telehealth in the recertification of a beneficiary for hospice.

Title II – Program Integrity

Sec. 201 – Clarifies that the provision of technologies to a Medicare beneficiary for the purpose of telehealth services is not considered "remuneration" under fraud and abuse laws.

Sec. 202 – Provides additional resources to the HHS Office of Inspector General for telehealth oversight.

Sec. 203 – Addresses significant outlier billing patterns for telehealth services⁴ through provider notification and technical assistance.

Title III – Beneficiary and Provider Supports, Quality of Care, and Data

Sec. 301 – Provides additional resources and study to improve beneficiary engagement in telehealth.

Sec. 302 – Provides resources and training on telehealth for health care professionals.

Sec. 303 – Ensures the inclusion of telehealth in measuring quality of care.

Sec. 304 – Requires CMS to publish detailed information on utilization of telehealth services quarterly.

¹ <https://oig.hhs.gov/oei/reports/OEI-02-20-00522.pdf>

² https://data.cms.gov/sites/default/files/2023-03/Medicare%20Telehealth%20Trends%20Snapshot%2020230308_508.pdf

³ <https://oig.hhs.gov/oei/reports/OEI-02-20-00520.pdf>

⁴ <https://oig.hhs.gov/oei/reports/OEI-02-20-00720.pdf>

The CONNECT for Health Act Is Endorsed By 170 Organizations

AAHomecare
AARP
ACT | The App Association
Adventist Health Policy Association
ADVION
Alliance for Aging Research
Alliance for Connected Care
Alliance of Community Health Plans
Alliance of Wound Care Stakeholders
ALS Association
Amazon
AMDA Society for Post-Acute and Long-Term Care Medicine
America's Essential Hospitals
American Academy of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology
American Academy of Audiology
American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine
American Academy of Neurology
American Academy of PAs
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation
American Academy of Sleep Medicine
American Association for Psychoanalysis in Clinical Social Work
American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases
American Association of Hip & Knee Surgeons
American Association of Neurological Surgeons
American Association of Nurse Practitioners
American Board of Quality Assurance and Utilization Review Physicians
American Clinical Neurophysiology Society
American College of Clinical Pharmacy
American College of Emergency Physicians
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
American College of Physicians
American College of Preventive Medicine
American Council of the Blind
American Group Psychotherapy Association
American Heart Association
American Lung Association
American Medical Association
American Medical Group Association
American Medical Rehabilitation Providers Association
American Nurses Association
American Orthotic and Prosthetic Association
American Psychiatric Association
American Psychological Association
American Society of Hematology
American Society of Pediatric Nephrology
American Telemedicine Association
ATA Action
American Urological Association
Americans for Prosperity & Concerned Veterans for America
Anxiety and Depression Association of America
Ascension
Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness
Association for Clinical Oncology
Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations
Association of Diabetes Care and Education Specialists
Association of Language Companies
Athenahealth
Cadence
Center for Telehealth and e-Health Law
Centerstone
Children's Health Fund
CICONIX, LLC
College of Healthcare Information Management Executives (CHIME)
Congress of Neurological Surgeons
Connected Health Initiative
Connected Home Living
Consumer Technology Association
Cystic Fibrosis Foundation
Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance
Digital Health Equitable Health Alliance
Duke Health
Eating Disorders Coalition for Research, Policy & Action
Emergency Department Practice Management Association
Encounter Telehealth
Endocrine Society
ExamMed
Federation of American Hospitals
Global Alliance for Behavioral Health and Social Justice
GO2 Foundation for Lung Cancer
Greater New York Hospital Association
Hackensack Meridian Health
Health Care Transformation Task Force
Health Innovation Alliance
Healthcare Association of Hawaii
Healthcare Leadership Council
Heart Failure Society of America
Highmark Wholecare
HIMSS
HIMSS Electronic Health Record Association
Hospital for Special Surgery
Included Health
InHome Healthcare Services
Intel
International OCD Foundation
Invitae
Jewish Federations of North America
Kaiser Permanente
LeadingAge
LifePoint
Lincare
Lutheran Services in America
Masimo
Medical Group Management Association
Melanoma Research Foundation
Michigan Medicine
Mom Congress
Muscular Dystrophy Association
NAADAC, the Association for Addiction Professionals
National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)
National Association for Healthcare Quality
National Association for Home Care & Hospice
National Association of Community Health Centers
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Association of Rural Health Clinics
National Association of Social Workers
National Council for Hospice and Palliative Care
National Council for Mental Wellbeing
National Council of State Boards of Nursing
National Federation of Families
National Health Care for the Homeless Council
National Health IT Collaborative for the Underserved
National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization
National Immigration Law Center
National League for Nursing
National MS Society
National Organization for Rare Disorders
National Partnership for Healthcare and Hospice Innovation
National Psoriasis Foundation
National Quality Forum
National Register of Health Service Psychologists
National Rural Health Association
Nemours Children's Health System
Network of Jewish Human Services Agencies
NMHM - No Health without Mental Health
NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association
OCHIN
Ochsner Health System
Oliver Wyman Health Innovation Center
Oncology Nursing Society
Pandemic Patients
Partnership to Advance Virtual Care
Philips
Policy Center for Maternal Mental Health
Providence Health
Public Health Institute
Pulmonary Hypertension Association
PursueCare
Quartet Health
REDC Consortium
Renal Physicians Association
Schizophrenia & Psychosis Action Alliance
Society of General Internal Medicine
Society of Thoracic Surgeons
Susan G. Komen
Teladoc Health
Telecommunications Industry Association (TIA)
Telehealth Equity Coalition
The ERISA Industry Committee
Third Way
TIS, Inc.
Tourette Association of America
United Spinal Association
University of Hawaii System
University of Mississippi Medical Center, Center for Telehealth
UPMC Health Plan
USofCare
UVA Health
Vizient
Wisconsin Hospital Association