



# TELEHEALTH IMPROVES PATIENT ACCESS TO CARE

*Action needed*  
to **MAINTAIN ACCESS!**  
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**ASHA**  
American  
Speech-Language-Hearing  
Association

Patients need permanent coverage of and clinicians need adequate payment for telehealth services.

**62.9%** of clinicians report accepting payment from patients for telehealth services because they are **not covered by insurance**.

**80.8%** of clinicians who provide services both in person and via telehealth report that brick and mortar costs, like rent and utilities, **remain a business expense**.

Telehealth services maintain access to timely quality care and improve the patient's experience of care.

Clinicians' costs do not decrease because services are delivered virtually. Payment for telehealth services should be the same as in-person services.



It costs an average of **\$1,380 per year** to provide services via telehealth (expenses for equipment and use of secure, HIPAA-compliant software).

**70%** of clinicians are providing similar materials to in-person and telehealth patients such as written or licensed digital materials, testing tools (e.g., tablet), and treatment tools (e.g., tongue depressors).

ASHA members report they spend on average **13 additional minutes** preparing for a telehealth session.

## Defining Service Providers



**AUDIOLOGISTS** specialize in preventing and assessing hearing and balance disorders as well as providing audiology treatment, including hearing aids.



**SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGISTS (SLPs)** identify, assess, and treat speech, language, cognitive-communication, and swallowing disorders.

Audiologists and SLPs are qualified providers of telehealth services, evaluating and treating people across the lifespan.

## Common Telehealth Services

### AUDIOLOGY

- ✓ Auditory rehabilitation
- ✓ Hearing aid evaluation and orientation
- ✓ Auditory function testing

### SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY

- ✓ Speech and language evaluation and treatment
- ✓ Cognitive-communication evaluation and treatment
- ✓ Augmentative and alternative communication

Patients are satisfied with telehealth services and outcomes are comparable to in-person services.

## ASHA's survey and NOMS data show:

### CLINICAL BENEFIT FOR PATIENTS

Clinicians report that patients who received services via telehealth:

- Saw improvement in their condition at comparable rates to patients who received services in person
- Were more compliant with their plan of care
- Experienced fewer adverse health outcomes, such as rehospitalizations, due to timely access to care

### PATIENT EXPERIENCE WITH TELEHEALTH

More than half of clinicians report that patients who received services via telehealth:

- Saved money by decreasing:
  1. lost wages for themselves or their caregivers
  2. transportation costs traveling to and from appointments
- Were more engaged in the development of the plan of care and treatment
- Had a better understanding of their cognitive or communication disorder
- Were less likely to miss appointments, improving continuity of care and contributing to timely improvement of the condition or maintenance of current function

On average **5%** of audiology and speech-language pathology services were **provided via telehealth** in 2020 across payers.

HHS OIG Report found that **0.2%** of Medicare telehealth claims were considered **"high risk"**.



### References:

- 2020 Utilization Data from Private Insurance, Medicaid, and Medicare Claims. Milliman Report, June 2022.
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- American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (n.d.). National Outcomes Measurement System.
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Office of Inspector General. (2 Sept. 2022). *Medicare Telehealth Services During the First Year of the Pandemic: Program Integrity Risks*. <https://oig.hhs.gov/oei/reports/OEI-02-20-00720.asp>

### About Us

**American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA)** is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for 234,000 members and affiliates who are audiologists; speech-language pathologists; speech, language, and hearing scientists; audiology and speech-language pathology assistants; and students.

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