

TELEPRACTICE ISSUES IN THE STATES

ACTION REQUESTED

ASHA is asking decision makers to define and regulate telepractice at the state and/or federal level on the same basis as in-person practice. ASHA supports laws that would allow audiologists and speech-language pathologists (SLPs) to provide services via telepractice and receive equitable reimbursement to in-person service delivery.

- **Regulation:** Define and recognize the use of telepractice as a method of service delivery.
- **Reimbursement:** Reimburse practitioners for services provided via telepractice and promote legislation that provides equitable reimbursement to in-person service delivery.

ISSUE: Telepractice Remains Underutilized Nationwide

- Despite proven benefits, telepractice remains underutilized nationwide within the professions of audiology and speech-language pathology due to a lack of clear state laws governing its use and/or mandating appropriate reimbursement for services delivered.
- A major benefit of telepractice is the increased access for consumers, especially in rural and underserved areas; however, many states are silent on the issue, meaning they have no current rules and regulations in place.
- Reimbursement of telepractice varies greatly from state to state. Some states have enacted parity laws, providing that telepractice should be reimbursed the same rates as in-person services; however, it rarely applies to all providers. All health plans, including Medicaid, differ regarding their policies on reimbursement for telepractice services.
- ASHA views telepractice as an appropriate service delivery model for audiology and speech-language pathology services. Practitioners follow the same ASHA service delivery guidelines, scope of practice, and Code of Ethics requirements that apply to face-to-face services, as well as any applicable state and federal laws.
- The regulation of telepractice services by audiologists and SLPs has been addressed by most states. The guidance issued by states varies from providing a definition of *telepractice* to establishing laws and regulations related to telepractice and who may be providers of this service.

SOLUTION: Expand Telepractice for Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology Services

Further define and recognize telepractice in states through laws and regulations that would allow audiologists and SLPs to participate in telepractice and provide reimbursement equitable to in-person services.

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