

December 2020 Telehealth Policy and Regulatory Update



1. U.S. Congressman James E. Clyburn's (SC-06) plan, A Better Deal to Rebuild America, supports the House Democratic Plan to Connect All Americans to Affordable Broadband Internet. "Just as the Rural Electrification Act made electricity accessible and affordable to all Americans, the plan we are announcing today will make broadband accessible and affordable to all Americans. As we see millions of our fellow Americans unable to telework, learn remotely, or access telehealth because they lack broadband, now is the time to act," said Congressman Clyburn.
<https://clyburn.house.gov/sites/clyburn.house.gov/files/documents/ABetterDealToRebuildAmerica.pdf>
2. South Carolina Senators Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) and Tim Scott (R-S.C.) introduced two new bills in the Fall to develop and expand broadband services.
 - S.4422 - Connecting Minority Communities Act creates a pilot program to provide grants to Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs), and Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) to expand access to broadband and digital opportunity in their communities.
 - S.4411 - Governors Broadband Development Fund prioritizes funding for areas that currently lack service, supports the deployment of advanced technologies, and encourages projects that can provide internet service quickly.

"Too many South Carolinians, and American families, lack access to the global economy, telehealth, and educational tools due to the lack of broadband technology," said Senator Tim Scott. "These bills will expand access to broadband and digital opportunities, which is needed to bridge the divide for underserved communities. It is critical that we continue to find pathways to increase connectivity for all Americans to ensure that they are equipped with the tools necessary to thrive."
3. On October 17, 2020 President Trump signed S. 785 (Public Law NO: 116-171), the '[Commander John Scott Hannon Veterans Mental Health Care Improvement Act of 2019](#)'. The bill includes a section on expanding telehealth capabilities and the provision of telehealth services to veterans through the [Department of Veterans Affairs](#) by awarding grants to organizations that represent or serve veterans, nonprofit organizations, private businesses, and other interested parties.
4. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) released the [2021 Medicare Physician Fee Schedule final rule](#) on December 1, 2020. The 2,165-page final rule adds more than 60 services to the Medicare telehealth list. These services will be covered even after the Covid-19 pandemic has ended. Early on in the Covid-19 crisis, CMS added 144 telehealth services to its coverage list through the end of the public health emergency. Follow the link below for the list of covered telehealth services:
<https://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Medicare-General-Information/Telehealth/Telehealth-Codes>.
5. The Center for Connected Health Policy's State Telehealth Laws and Reimbursement Policies Report attached below is an excellent resource to quickly identify the telehealth laws and policies in South Carolina.

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<https://www.cchpca.org/sites/default/files/2020-10/CCHP%2050%20STATE%20REPORT%20FALL%202020%20FINAL.pdf>



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