



SCHOOL WELLNESS PROGRAM POLICY & PROCEDURE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS: TELEHEALTH

**THIS DOCUMENT IS TO BE USED AS A GUIDANCE TOOL IN DEVELOPING
TELEHEALTH POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR SCHOOL WELLNESS PROGRAMS.**

OVERVIEW:

The Institute of Medicine (2012) identifies telehealth as a potential strategy to remove barriers to care by providing extended health and mental health services; promote collaboration between regional health centers and healthcare providers in remote areas; decrease school absenteeism; and support timely access to meet urgent and emergent healthcare needs. The National Association of School Nurses (2020) supports telehealth technology as an opportunity for school nurses to connect with students to improve access to primary care and specialty services due to health disparities caused by poverty and other social determinants of health. Case management and care coordination; preventive health counseling and health education are examples of how SWP nurses could utilize telehealth technology. Opportunities may be available for SWP nurses to collaborate with health providers within their fiduciary or local community to utilize standing orders to provide additional expanded services to clients (e.g. sick visits/acute care, physical exams, sexual health services). Mental health services could include assessments and counseling, crisis intervention and individual/group education. Both nursing and mental health providers could use telehealth for risk assessments, communication with other providers about complex health/mental health cases and referrals to community resources (e.g. food assistance, childcare, transportation).

DEFINITIONS:

Telehealth and Telemedicine: Telemedicine is the use of medical information exchanged from one site to another via electronic communications to improve patients' health status. Strongly associated with telemedicine is the term "telehealth," which is often used to encompass a broader definition of remote healthcare that does not always involve clinical services. Videoconferencing, transmission of still images, e-health including patient portals, remote monitoring of vital signs, continuing medical education and nursing call centers are all considered part of telemedicine and telehealth (American Telemedicine Association, 2019).

Virtual Care: A broad term meant to capture all clinical interactions in health care that do not involve the patient and provider being in the same room at the same time. Consultations may be asynchronous, whereby patients answer structured clinical questions online and then receive care from a physician at a later time ("e-visits"), or synchronous, whereby patients interact with physicians in real time via telephone ("teleconsultations"), videoconference ("virtual visits") or even by text (McGrail et al, 2017).

PURPOSE:

The purpose of the SWP telehealth policy is to improve access to health care services by enabling the provision of health care with the utilization of telehealth equipment/platforms in order to meet the needs of the patient, while complying with all applicable federal and state statutes and regulations (Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, 2020).

Procedures for Utilizing Telehealth in the SWP should include:

1. Identification of nursing services, including specific nursing assessments and expanded care, to be completed via telehealth.
2. Identification of the mental health services delivered via telehealth.
3. Use of a secured audio and visual platform to deliver telehealth services including the appropriate maintenance/updating of the telemedicine equipment.
4. Description of staff training requirements for providing telehealth in the SWP. This may include examination techniques if the nurse is working with a distant provider.
5. Description of telehealth partners and formal agreements if collaborative relationships exist between the SWP and other fiduciary providers or local/regional health care providers.
6. Description of a private and comfortable environment (provider and client) that is conducive to providing a telehealth visit.
7. Ensuring there is written consent for telehealth services by the parent/guardian and minor consent when appropriate.
8. Ensuring nursing and mental health standards of care are followed.
9. Ensure nursing standing orders are inclusive of telehealth as appropriate.

10. Description of processes to inform clients, families, and staff about telehealth services in the SWP.
11. Description of documentation procedures for nursing and mental health services that include identifying the visit as a telehealth.
12. Description of processes for sharing confidential information from a telehealth visit that meet HIPAA and when appropriate FERPA guidelines as well as other applicable local, state, and federal laws.
13. Description of processes for privacy and security to ensure confidentiality and integrity of patient identifiable information.
14. Description of procedures staff follow to allow for billing telehealth services.
15. Description of a back-up communication plan in case technology issues or emergencies arise during the visit.

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