

Using Telehealth for Underserved Communities

Telehealth helps underserved communities receive health care.

Who are underserved communities?

[Underserved communities](#) may include people with low incomes, people with HIV, those living in rural areas, pregnant women, and families with children. People in underserved communities may not have the same access to health care as others do. Telehealth may help providers give these communities the health care they need.

What are the benefits of using telehealth for underserved communities?

Telehealth can increase access to care for patients. Providers and specialists can use telehealth to work as a team to coordinate care. This improves outcomes for patients with complex health needs.

Safety-net providers play a key role in caring for underserved communities. Telehealth expands the reach of safety-net providers, including Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) and Rural Health Clinics (RHCs).

How can telehealth help providers reach their underserved communities?

These communities vary in their level of technology needs. Patients in these areas may or may not have access to the internet or current devices. Here are some ways people from diverse backgrounds can access telehealth:



Video appointments. You can see and hear your patient just like an in-person visit. Devices like a computer, smartphone, or tablet that has a microphone, speaker, and camera are necessary for video telehealth appointments. You may need to connect to an interpreter for translation or sign language during the visit.



Phone calls. Some patients in underserved communities may prefer to have a telehealth visit over the phone.



Secure emails or texting. You can connect with your patients in underserved communities by sending and receiving private messages. You can send test results or images this way.



Remote patient monitoring. Tracking certain health information is important for monitoring a patient's health condition. You can keep track of their weight, temperature, blood pressure, or other data. This is helpful for patients who find it difficult to travel.

More resources

- [Billing Medicare as a safety-net provider](#) - Health Resources and Services Administration
- [Telehealth for rural areas](#) - Health Resources and Services Administration
- [Federally qualified health center](#) - Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
- [Rural health clinics](#) - Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services

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