



Alaska



Overall Landscape: Alaska’s Medicaid program provides comprehensive coverage of telehealth services, as it covers live video and audio-only modalities, allows the patient to be located wherever they choose, and has payment parity for telehealth service delivery. Given its size and remote location, Alaska presents unique abortion access issues that make telehealth a vital strategy for combating geographic isolation and provider shortages.

How Does Alaska Medicaid Define Telehealth?

Alaska Medicaid defines telehealth as the “practice of health care delivery, evaluation, diagnosis, consultation or treatment... performed over two or more locations between providers who are physically separate from the recipient or from each other.”

Are There Restrictions On Where The Patient Can Be Located?

No, Alaska Medicaid defines the originating site (the patient’s location) as “the location of the member” which allows maximum flexibility for the patient.

Does Alaska Medicaid Have Payment Parity For Telehealth Services?

Yes, Alaska Medicaid has clarified that “telehealth is considered a mode of delivery and is reimbursed at the same rate as if done in person” for all covered modalities.

What Are Covered Modalities In Alaska Medicaid?

Alaska Medicaid covers the following modalities:

- Synchronous Video: Yes
- Synchronous Audio-Only: Yes (when using dedicated audio conferencing system)
- Store-And-Forward: Yes (when used for consultations between providers)
- Remote Patient Monitoring: Yes

Can A Provider Establish A Relationship With A Patient Via Telehealth?

Alaska Medicaid has no clear policy on this but guidance from the Alaska State Medical Board indicates physicians may establish a patient relationship via telehealth if the physician meets a variety of requirements including but not limited to being licensed in the state and obeying relevant laws and practice standards. It is unclear if this applies to non-physician providers.

What Is The State Of Abortion Access In Alaska?

Over eighty percent of Alaska counties had no clinic that provided abortions and only had six providers in total according to the Guttmacher Institute. A study found twenty percent of women in Alaska would have to drive over 150 miles to reach the nearest abortion provider. Despite these access issues, Alaska is not predicted to be among the states expected to ban abortion in the following year and has constitutional protections for abortion access.

Who Can Provide Abortion Care In Alaska?

Thanks to a 2021 preliminary injunction in ongoing litigation, advance practice clinicians, in addition to physicians, can currently provide medication abortion care in Alaska.