

SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH CENTER
POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL

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Policy 110 – Telehealth Services

I. POLICY

Southern Highlands Community Mental Health Center may provide services via telehealth communication. We will follow guidelines for telehealth services as indicated by the West Virginia Bureau of Medical Services and the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources.

Telehealth services will be provided using a HIPAA secure network. All laws regarding protection of confidentiality and prohibition of release of information will apply to services provided by telehealth. Southern Highlands will provide access to the service provider using the HIPAA secure network.

II. DISCUSSION

Telehealth allows health care professionals to evaluate, diagnose, and treat consumers at a distance using telecommunications technology.

The type of telehealth services to be offered by our Agency will be live video conferencing. This is the most well-known type of telehealth—and is a live, two-way video-based conference between a consumer and their healthcare provider. . Healthcare providers may include: a psychiatrist, physician’s assistant, nurse practitioners, therapists, or other behavioral health professionals. Services that may be provided via telehealth include therapy, clinical evaluations, psychiatric evaluations and pharmacological services, MAT services, service planning, case management, provider services, and other services deemed appropriate.

The benefits of receiving treatment via video conferencing are elimination of transportation barriers or travel time, flexibility in scheduling, access to specialty providers, convenience service delivery, and private treatment in the setting of your choosing.

The risks of receiving treatment via video conferencing are technology failures (i.e. insufficient broadband for video or voice clarity), confidentiality or equipment failure.

III. PROCEDURE

Consumers will be asked to sign a written consent for participation in telehealth communication. The consent will contain the following:

- The right to withdraw from the service at any time.
- A description of the risks, benefits, and consequences of telemedicine.
- Application of all existing confidentiality protections.
- Right of the patient to documentation regarding all transmitted medical information.
- Prohibition of dissemination of any patient images or information to other entities without further written consent.

Telehealth services do not include telephone conversations, electronic mail message (e-mail), third party applications that are not HIPAA compliant (i.e. Skype, Face Time, etc.) or facsimile transmission (fax) between a provider and member.

Protocol for Telehealth Services

Initial Set-Up

- Clinician or other assigned staff will help consumer to determine what mode they will use for treatment—on site in person or on site via telehealth, via telehealth or via telephone. Telehealth is the preferred mode over telephone if possible.
- Southern Highlands will use Zoom, which is HIPAA secure, for all telehealth services with consumers.
- Clinician or other assigned staff will help consumer's set-up and test Zoom prior to initial appointment.
- Clinician or other assigned staff will encourage consumer to use password protected internet/device. They should also set their privacy settings as restrictive as possible.
- Clinician or other assigned staff will explain to consumers that they need to have a designated secure and private location for telehealth services where there will be no interruptions. (This is especially important in group settings to protect the confidentiality of all participants.)
- Due to our licensing, consumers must be physically present in the state of West Virginia.
- Clinician or other assigned staff will make sure that that light, camera angle, background and sound are appropriate for both parties for the Zoom session.
- They will teach consumers Zoom features such as mute.

- They will inform them of concurrent documentation—you may hear the clinician typing.

In Case of an Emergency

- Clinician or other assigned staff will obtain physical address/telephone of consumer in case of an emergency.
- Clinician or other assigned staff will obtain emergency contact information to put in the medical record in case of an emergency.

Confidentiality

- Clinician or other assigned staff will ensure that Consent to Treat, Telehealth consent, and Authorization to Disclose Information forms are completed and in the medical record.
- Clinician or other assigned staff will explain confidentiality and HIPAA to consumers concerning telehealth services. No recordings, screen shots, use of cell phones other than for Zoom will be permitted during sessions, etc.
- They will encourage consumers to use head phones for additional confidentiality.
- Clinician or other assigned staff will help consumers identify a code name or initials to use for confidentiality when using Zoom.
- Clinician or other assigned staff will help consumer identify a code word to signal when dialogue needs to discontinue via Zoom due to confidentiality or safety.
- Clinician or other assigned staff will encourage consumers to use a towel under the door or white noise to help drown out sound from other members in the household if needed.
- Consumers may be dismissed from group if HIPAA/confidentiality requirements are not followed.
- Clinician will document in evaluation/note that service was provided via telehealth. He or she will also document that the identity of the consumer was confirmed and that consumer had an appropriate level of privacy to proceed with the telehealth service.

Technological Failures

- Consumers will need to check-in (clinician will confirm identity by birthdate) and communicate with clinician during session to help verify attendance and participation.
- If a consumer is unable to connect for a session due to technical issues on their end, they will need to immediately contact 304-431-1414 to report their issue. Any time under thirty minutes will be counted as an absent and will not be billed.
- If we are unable to connect with a consumer for a session due to a technical issue on our end, the consumer will not be penalized or billed for the session. However, they may be asked to make it up for content.
- If a consumer gets disconnected for some reason during the session, they may attempt to log back into the waiting room. If they are not let back in within five

minutes, they will need to contact front desk staff as soon as possible to inform them of the issue.

- If a consumer does not appear in actual video during session, it will count as a telephone visit.