

# CONNECT ACT FOR HEALTH (2021)

JULY 26, 2021



Mei Wa Kwong, JD,  
*Executive Director, CCHP*



## CENTER FOR CONNECTED HEALTH POLICY (CCHP)

is a non-profit, non-partisan organization that seeks to advance state and national telehealth policy to promote improvements in health systems and greater health equity.

# DISCLAIMERS

- Any information provided in today's talk is not to be regarded as legal advice. Today's talk is purely for informational purposes.
- Always consult with legal counsel.
- CCHP has no relevant financial interest, arrangement, or affiliation with any organizations related to commercial products or services discussed in this program.

# ABOUT CCHP

- Established in 2009 as a program under the Public Health Institute
- Became federally designated national telehealth policy resource center in 2012 through a grant from HRSA
- Work with a variety of funders and partners on the state and federal levels
- Administrator National Consortium of Telehealth Resource Centers
- Convener for California Telehealth Policy Coalition



# TELEHEALTH POLICY CHANGES IN COVID-19

## FEDERAL

MEDICARE ISSUE	CHANGE
Geographic Limit	Waived
Site limitation	Waived
Provider List	Expanded
Services Eligible	Added additional 80 codes
Visit limits	Waived certain limits
Modality	Live Video, Phone, some srvs
Supervision requirements	Relaxed some
Licensing	Relaxed requirements
Tech-Enabled/Comm-Based (not considered telehealth, but uses telehealth technology)	More codes eligible for phone & allowed PTs/OTs/SLPs & other use

- DEA – PHE prescribing exception/allowed phone for suboxone for OUD
- HIPAA – OCR will not fine during this time

## STATE (Most Common Changes)

MEDICAID ISSUE	CHANGE
Modality	Allowing phone
Location	Allowing home
Consent	Relaxed consent requirements
Services	Expanded types of services eligible
Providers	Allowed other providers such as allied health pros
Licensing	Waived some requirements

- Private payer orders range from encouragement to cover telehealth to more explicit mandates
- Relaxed some health information protections

# CONNECT ACT FOR HEALTH

- **Author: Senator Brian Schatz (D-HI) S 1512**
- Removing Barriers to Telehealth Coverage
  - Home allowed to be eligible site for all services
  - Geographic limitation removed
  - FQHCs/RHCs added to list of eligible providers, would receive PPS rate
  - Geographic limitation not apply to an Indian Health Services facility or if providing emergency care
  - No facility fees for some of these new exceptions like the home

# CONNECT ACT FOR HEALTH

- Removing Barriers to Telehealth Coverage – Secretary Powers
  - Secretary provided with authority to waive certain limitations
    - Originating site
    - Geographic limitations
    - Limits on technology used
    - Limits on practitioners who can use telehealth and be reimbursed
    - Types of services covered
    - Any other limitation Secretary deems necessary
    - Able to set policies and fee schedule for these waivers

# CONNECT ACT



## Program Integrity

- Provide the Inspector General in HHS \$3 million to conduct audits, investigations and other duties to ensure program integrity
- Secretary shall make training and education resources available to providers and beneficiaries so they're aware of these changes




# CONNECT ACT

- Data and Testing Models
  - Secretary will collect and analyze data for both telehealth and communications technology-based services (CTBS)
    - Utilization rate
    - Quality
    - Health outcomes
    - Audio-only
  - Interim & final report to Congress
  - Analysis of telehealth waivers in alternative payment models



# CCHP FACT SHEET

<https://www.cchpca.org/2021/05/CONNECT-Act-Fact-Sheetfinal.pdf>

 Center for Connected Health Policy

THE NATIONAL  
TELEHEALTH POLICY  
RESOURCE CENTER

FACT SHEET | May 2021

## Creating Opportunities Now for Necessary and Effective Care Technologies (CONNECT) for Health Act of 2021

FACT SHEET | May 2021

The “Creating Opportunities Now for Necessary and Effective Care Technologies (CONNECT) for Health Act of 2021” was recently introduced by Senator Brian Schatz (D-HI). Having authored previous iterations of this bill, Senator Schatz notes that this Act will promote higher quality of care, increased access to care and reduce spending in Medicare through the expansion of telehealth services. Thus far, it has received bipartisan support from the majority of his fellow Senators.

▶ There are three main sections to the CONNECT Act:

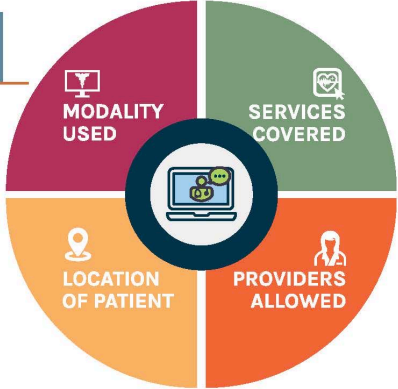
1. Removing Barriers to Telehealth Coverage
2. Program Integrity
3. Data and Testing of Models

### 1. Removing Barriers to Telehealth Coverage

Existing telehealth reimbursement policy typically has four issues in which the policy in question touches. Medicare telehealth policy is no different. These areas are:

- Modality Used
- Location of Patient
- Providers
- Services Covered

The CONNECT Act, to varying extent, will impact all four policy areas.




MODALITY USED

SERVICES COVERED

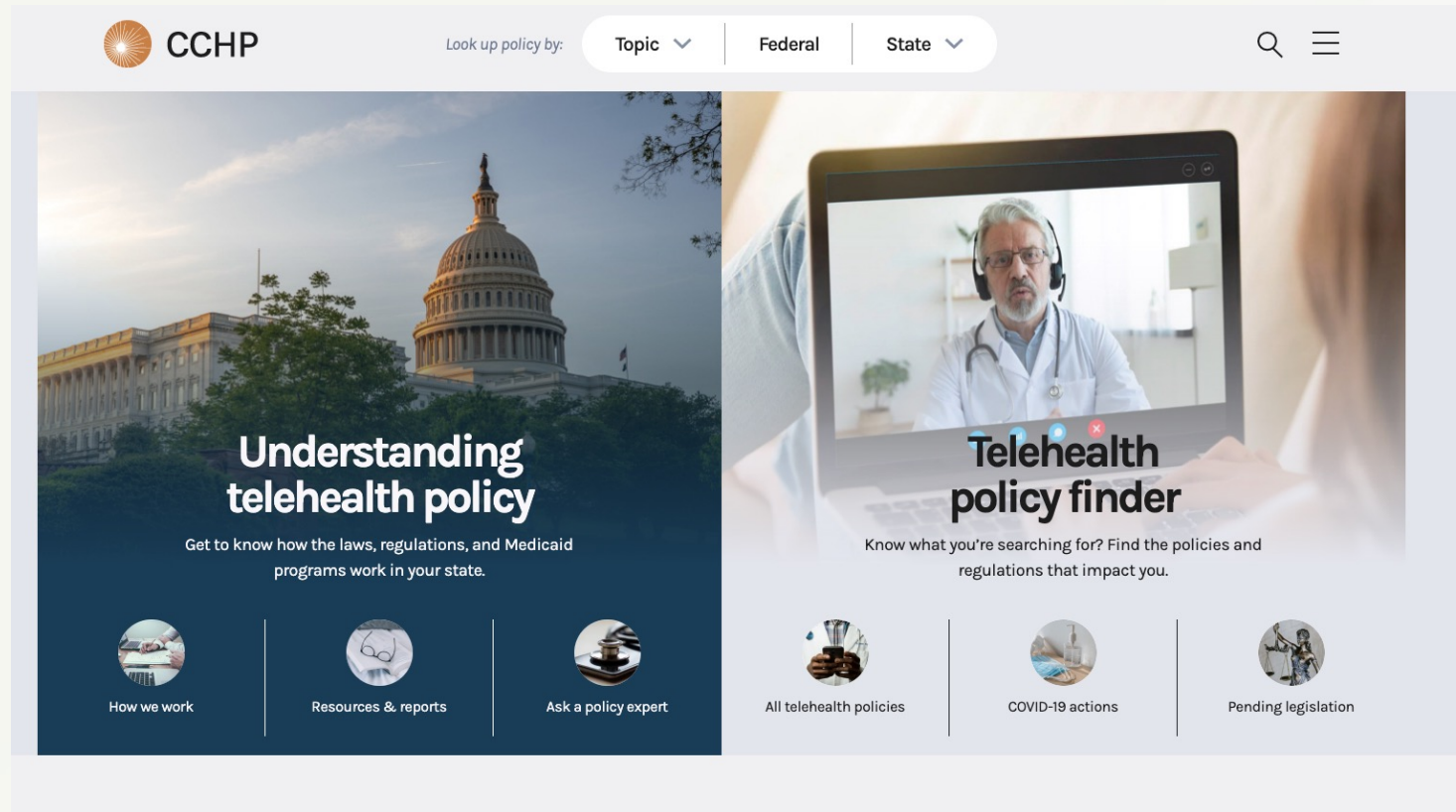
PROVIDERS ALLOWED

LOCATION OF PATIENT

 © 2021 Center for Connected Health Policy / Public Health Institute

1

## ➤ CCHP Website – [cchpca.org](https://cchpca.org)



## ➤ Subscribe to the CCHP newsletter at [cchpca.org/contact/subscribe](https://cchpca.org/contact/subscribe)



# Thank You!

[www.cchpca.org](http://www.cchpca.org)

[info@cchpca.org](mailto:info@cchpca.org)