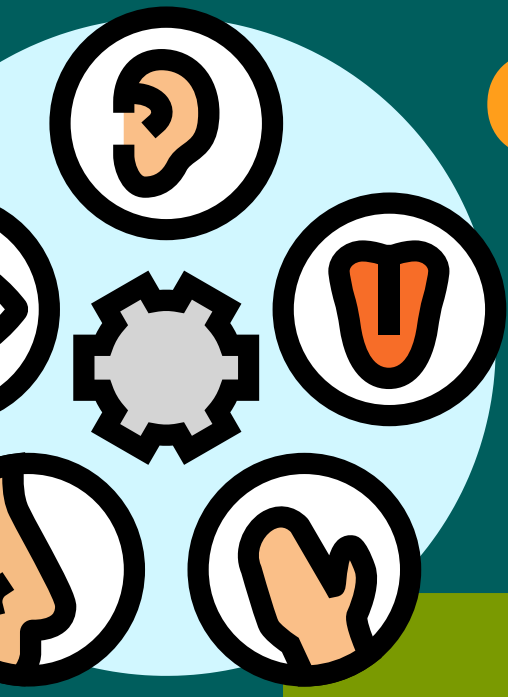


# UTILIZING TELHEALTH IN OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY (OT)

Research has shown OT services provided via telehealth can be effective and are in high demand, especially for rural and underserved populations.



## AOTA TELEHEALTH PRACTICE ETHICS<sup>1</sup>

## OT LICENSURE & COMPACT

### 1 Know the Regulations



Occupational therapy practitioners (OTPs) must comply with all federal and state laws, regulations, statutes, and telehealth related policies.

### 1 Location Matters



Occupational therapy practitioners must be licensed in the state where the patient is physically located.

### 2 Educate Your Patients



OTPs must educate patients on risks, benefits, organizational policies for retention of patient information, and their rights and responsibilities regarding telehealth services.

### 2 New Opportunities



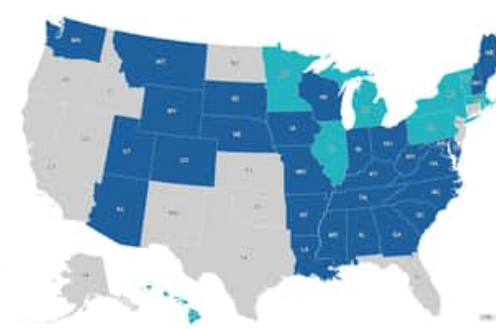
The OT licensure compact would afford occupational therapists and occupational therapy assistants the opportunity to practice and provide services in states that have joined the compact?<sup>2</sup>

### 3 Other Considerations



When determining if telehealth is appropriate for your patient, consider: exposure of patient privacy & confidentiality, skill level of caregiver if needed, technology & equipment malfunctions, and costs associated with technology.

### 3 Compact Members



As of May 2024, 28 states have enacted the licensure compact with Wisconsin, Iowa, South Dakota, and Nebraska being four of these.<sup>4</sup>

## WAYS TO PREPARE FOR TELEHEALTH



### 1 Prepare Your Background

To prepare for telehealth: Display your true background, sit close to the screen, make sure you are well lit, and avoid distracting home decor.<sup>3</sup>



### 2 Patient Technology Education

Explore what technology and network your patient has access to prior to the session. Provide patient or caregiver education as appropriate.



### 3 Practice Your Treatment

If you are new to telehealth services, practice with friends or colleagues prior to sessions.

<sup>1</sup> AMERICAN OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSOCIATION. (2023). AOTA ETHICS ADVISORY OPINION: ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS IN TELEHEALTH. [HTTPS://WWW.AOTA.ORG/-/MEDIA/CORPORATE/FILES/SECURE/PRACTICE/ETHICS/ADVISORY/TELEHEALTH-ADVISORY.PDF](https://www.aota.org/-/media/corporate/files/secure/practice/ethics/advisory/telehealth-advisory.pdf)  
<sup>2</sup> MARKELS, D. (2023, DECEMBER 1). OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY LICENSURE COMPACT MAKES PROGRESS ON MULTIPLE FRONTS. AOTA.ORG. [HTTPS://WWW.AOTA.ORG/PUBLICATIONS/OT-PRACTICE/OT-PRACTICE-ISSUES/2023/CAPITAL-REPORT-OCCUPATIONAL-THERAPY-LICENSURE-COMPACT-MAKES-PROGRESS-ON-MULTIPLE-FRONT](https://www.aota.org/publications/ot-practice/ot-practice-issues/2023/capital-report-occupational-therapy-licensure-compact-makes-progress-on-multiple-fronts)  
<sup>3</sup> KITA, J. (2024, JANUARY 11). TEN WAYS YOUR TELEHEALTH BACKDROP CAN IMPROVE PATIENT CARE. MEDSCAPE. [HTTPS://WWW.MEDSCAPE.COM/VIEWARTICLE/TEN-WAYS-YOUR-TELEHEALTH-BACKDROP-CAN-IMPROVE-PATIENT-CARE](https://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/ten-ways-your-telehealth-backdrop-can-improve-patient-care)  
<sup>4</sup> OTCOMPACT.ORG. (N.D.). [HTTPS://OTCOMPACT.ORG/](https://otcompact.org/)

# SECURITY & HIPAA-COMPLIANCE

Security requirements for telehealth practice can feel overwhelming. Some considerations include:



- 1 What are the technology requirements for HIPAA-compliance? See OT Potential's [Telehealth Guide](#) and [HHS's HIPAA Guide](#).
- 2 Some platforms include features such as scheduling, screen sharing, patient portals, e-documentation, and resource libraries.
- 3 What is the monthly cost of the platform? Platforms can range from \$4-\$49 per month.<sup>6</sup>
- 4 What device and browser will your patients be using? Some platforms are only compatible with specific browsers and devices.
- 5 Some populations may be more familiar with certain platforms while others may require technology education prior to telehealth.

## POLICY, BILLING & REIMBURSEMENT

### Current Policy

The Consolidated Appropriations Act in 2023 extended coverage of Public Health Emergency (PHE) services until the end of December 2024 for occupational therapy, physical therapy, and speech therapy. This includes both video and audio only telehealth services. It is unclear whether CMS will extend coverage for these therapy services beyond December of 2024.

### Billing & Reimbursement

Always bill with the appropriate CPT code, modifier, and place of service.<sup>5</sup>

Modifiers	Description
GQ	Telehealth services rendered via asynchronous telecommunication system
95	Synchronous telemedicine service rendered via real-time interactive video telecommunication system
POS Codes	Description
POS 2	Telehealth provided other than in patient's home (patient is not located in their home during time of telehealth service)
POS 10	Telehealth provided in the patient's home (the patient is at their home during time of telehealth service)

For more information, visit the following websites:

- [cchpca.org](http://cchpca.org)
- [AOTA policy & billing](#)
- [gpTRAC.org](http://gpTRAC.org)



## DOCUMENTATION, ASSESSMENTS, & COTA SUPERVISION

### 1 Documentation



When providing telehealth services, it's important to include:

- Location of originating/distance sites
- Type of delivery model
- Individuals present
- Supports provided to/by the caregiver<sup>7</sup>
- Clinical reasoning for telehealth

### 2 Assessments



Companies have created online evaluation systems for OTPs to utilize through telehealth. These can be used to administer assessments asynchronously, such as questionnaire-based assessments, interview based assessments, scoring, and reporting.

### 3 COTA Supervision



Certified occupational therapy assistants (COTAs) work with patients under the supervision of OTPs. While many states have adapted their regulations to accommodate supervision through telehealth, best practice is to check your state regulations for the most current guidelines.

## BEST TELEHEALTH ETIQUETTE

### 1 Preparation



Have your materials gathered and prepared prior to the session. Online filing systems with OT resources can help keep your materials organized and allow for quick retrieval.

### 2 Materials



Send the patient a checklist of materials ahead of time if there are items they need to have ready for the session (e.g., kitchen utensils, rubber bands, clothing, etc.)

### 3 Environmental Safety



Have the patient prepare their physical environment before the session. (e.g., move rugs, place pets in a different room during the session, etc.)

5) BILLING AND CODING MEDICARE FEE-FOR-SERVICE CLAIMS. TELEHEALTH.HHS.GOV. (2023, DECEMBER 19). [HTTPS://TELEHEALTH.HHS.GOV/PROVIDERS/BILLING-AND-REIMBURSEMENT/BILLING-AND-CODING-MEDICARE-FEE-FOR-SERVICE-CLAIMS](https://telehealth.hhs.gov/providers/billing-and-reimbursement/billing-and-coding-medicare-fee-for-service-claims)  
6) LYONS, S. (2022, DECEMBER 2). TELEHEALTH OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY GUIDE. OT POTENTIAL. [HTTPS://OTPOTENTIAL.COM/BLOG/TELEHEALTH-OCCUPATIONAL-THERAPY](https://otpotential.com/blog/telehealth-occupational-therapy)  
7) SPEIGHTS, A. (2022, NOVEMBER 18). OT SERVICES FOR OUR LITTLEST CLIENTS: CULTURALLY INFORMED TELEHEALTH COACHING IN EARLY INTERVENTION. CONTINUED.