



## [Telehealth Modernization Act](#)

The COVID-19 public health emergency (PHE) led to significant growth in the use of telehealth services among surgical specialties, including orthopaedics. Policy changes enacted by Congress, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to temporarily remove many barriers to access for telehealth during the PHE contributed to this growth. Many of these policies are set to expire at the end of the PHE potentially reversing impressive progress made in modernizing the nation's healthcare system and limiting access to care for patients.

AAOS believes that telehealth allows orthopaedic surgeons and surgical teams to improve quality of care by improving access, reducing patient travel burden, improving clinical workflows and increasing practice efficiency and compliance with follow-up which ultimately enhances patient wellness.

### [The Telehealth Modernization Act Would:](#)

**The Telehealth Modernization Act (H.R. 1332/S. 368) will ensure that Medicare beneficiaries who rely on telehealth services will retain access to critical high-quality care following the expiration of the PHE. Specifically, this legislation:**

- **Lifts all geographic and originating site restrictions.** AAOS believes that telehealth services provided through Medicare should not be limited to those in rural areas or who travel to approved origination sites. Burdensome requirements on patients or health care professionals will only lessen the clinical benefit of these services and reduce access to care.
- **Will allow for more services to be covered over telehealth** by granting HHS the authority to retain and modify the currently expanded list of covered services. AAOS supports this authority and is standing by to support a data-driven process for selecting covered services and ensures high-quality care.
- **Will permanently allow federally qualified health centers (FQHCs) and rural health clinics (RHCs) to serve as eligible distant sites for telehealth services,** expanding access to vital healthcare services in rural and underserved areas.

### [AAOS Recommends:](#)

**Congress should pass the Telehealth Modernization Act to ensure Medicare beneficiaries don't lose critical access to telehealth services following the expiration of the COVID-19 PHE. Passing the Telehealth Modernization Act will ensure we do not backtrack and lose the substantial progress made in modernizing and improving patient access to healthcare services.**

For more information, contact Catherine Hayes in the AAOS Office of Government Relations at 202-841-4502.