

# Telehealth (TeleBH)

## BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CARE

We are committed to the care and well-being of our members. We are also committed to working with you as a partner to develop the best possible treatment plans for all patients.



### What is Behavioral Telehealth?

The COVID-19 public health emergency enabled the advancement of delivering care virtually, providing an opportunity for mental health providers to be reimbursed for behavioral telehealth services,<sup>1</sup> also known as teleBH.

Telehealth or telemedicine is the delivery of healthcare services using virtual technology. Providers can provide medical advice, a diagnosis, or a prescription by video or phone. It is a convenient way for patients to access health care services using a computer, tablet, or smart phone from the privacy and comfort of their own home. Additional benefits include:

- ✓ Reduced appointment and office wait times for patients.
- ✓ Faster and more equitable access to care and prescriptions.
- ✓ Decreased appointment cancellations by eliminating barriers such as need for childcare, missed work/ school, and transportation.
- ✓ Provides patients with access to specialists who speak the same language or have similar cultural backgrounds.
- ✓ Increased comfort for patients to talk about mental health and substance use related concerns, who may have felt uncomfortable in an office setting.
- ✓ Enables increased scheduling capabilities to treat more patients.



### What Are Common TeleBH Services?

- Psychiatric assessments
- Individual online counseling
- Online group therapy
- Treatment related to substance use disorder
- Telepsychiatry for prescription monitoring and refills

<sup>1</sup> Telehealth is not to be used for any condition where patients are required to see a doctor or for medical emergencies.

Ambetter of Alabama is underwritten by Celtic Insurance Company, which is a Qualified Health Plan issuer in the Alabama Health Insurance Marketplace.



## How Can You Engage Patients in TeleBH

- ✓ Help patients better understand what telehealth is, the benefits of virtual health care, and how to schedule a telehealth appointment.
- ✓ Provide extra guidance and support for patients to know how to access and troubleshoot your telehealth platform.
  - Send reminders and instructions ahead of the telehealth appointment to ensure access.
  - Explore the option of “rooming” which has shown more successful telehealth encounters.
  - Train support staff on the basics of your telehealth platform.
- ✓ Discuss patient rights and responsibilities, set expectations, and plan for emergency situations at each appointment.
- ✓ Treat patients as if they are sitting across from you, avoid distractions, and communicate with empathetic expressions just as you would if they were physically present in your office.
- ✓ Check your state’s current laws and reimbursement policies, and code claims correctly.



### Support

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Please view the Provider section of our website at [AmbetterofAlabama.com](https://www.ambetterofalabama.com) for additional tools and resources. You may also contact a Provider Relations or Quality Improvement Specialist for assistance at **1-800-442-1623 (Relay 711)**.

### Additional Resources

[CCHPCA.org](https://www.cchpca.org) – Center for Connected Health Policy (CCHP) telehealth-related laws and regulations

[TELEHEALTH.HHS.gov](https://www.telehealth.hhs.gov) – Telehealth: Health care from the safety of our homes



### References

[NCQA.org](https://www.ncqa.org) – Follow-Up After Hospitalization (FUH) for Mental Illness