



HEALTHY MINDS
POLICY INITIATIVE

Fair and Equal Access to Telehealth Services

SB 674 by Sen. Greg McCortney and Rep. Marcus McEntire

SB 674 expands telehealth access by ensuring that medically-appropriate telehealth visits are valued the same as similar in-person visits, with no greater patient costs or limitations and with equal provider reimbursement. In a public health emergency, these measures helped Oklahomans through the COVID-19 era on a temporary basis. If made permanent, they can transform access to care in rural areas and for mental health services.

Oklahomans deserve fair and equal access to telehealth

- Commonly reporting less pay for telehealth care, **practitioners are dis-incentivized to expand telehealth services** while demand is at an all-time high.
- Stringent claims review processes can delay approvals or result in more denials. This bill ensures these processes are the same for telehealth as for in-person visits.
- COVID-19 has drastically increased the mental health needs of Oklahomans. Some mental health providers currently receive no reimbursement for services rendered via telehealth.

Expanding access improves healthcare for rural Oklahomans

- Oklahoma has a **significant shortage of behavioral health providers**, particularly psychiatrists. While communities need 30.3 psychiatrists per 100,000 people Oklahoma only has 10.3. Telehealth makes treatment by specialists accessible.
- Telehealth will never replace in-person care and providers will continue to have the overhead costs of physical space. However, parity enables medical practices to **prioritize more coordinated and holistic care** and deliver cost-effective care in the manner best suited for each patient's situation.
- Access to telehealth **deters higher cost visits** down the line.

Clinically tailored solutions maximize patient choice

- SB 674 is not a new coverage mandate; it extends parity protections to telehealth services
- SB 674 relies on physician discretion when deciding to best level of care for a patient

Mental health and other specialty services **add value** by substituting appointments, not adding cost or unnecessary care.