

## **Virginia Board of Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology**

### **Guidance for Telepractice**

1. What is telepractice?

Telepractice may be defined as the use of telecommunications and information technologies for delivery of speech-language pathology or audiology professional services by linking a client and clinician for assessment, intervention or consultation.

2. May a practitioner licensed in another state provide services to a client located in Virginia?

To provide audiology or speech-language pathology services to a client in the Commonwealth of Virginia via telepractice, a practitioner must hold a Virginia license and comply with relevant laws and regulations governing practice.

3. Are there any regulations specific to providing audiology or speech-language pathology services via telepractice?

Telepractice is considered a method of service delivery. The current, applicable regulations apply to all methods of service delivery, including telepractice. The licensee is responsible for using professional judgment to determine if the type of service can be delivered via telepractice at the same standard of care as in-person service.

4. To provide the same standard of care as an in-person visit, what are some of the responsibilities of a practitioner when providing audiology or speech-language pathology services via telepractice?

- To determine the appropriateness of providing assessment and intervention services via telepractice for each client and each situation;
- To ensure confidentiality and privacy of clients and their transmissions;
- To maintain appropriate documentation including informed consent for use of telepractice;
- To be responsible for the performance and activities of any unlicensed assistant or facilitator who may be used at the client site, in accordance with Virginia regulation, 18VAC30-21-140;
- To ensure that equipment used for telepractice is in good working order and is properly maintained at both site locations;

- To comply with Virginia and federal (such as HIPAA and FERPA) requirements regarding maintenance of patient records and confidentiality of client information; and
  - To ensure that confidential communications obtained and stored electronically cannot be recovered and accessed by unauthorized individuals when the licensee disposes of electronic equipment and data.
5. What factors should be considered when determining if telepractice is appropriate to use? Factors to consider include, but are not limited to:
- The quality of electronic transmissions for both the patient and practitioner should be appropriate for the provision of telepractice as if those services were provided in person;
  - The practitioner should only utilize technology for which he/she has been trained and is competent;
  - The practitioner should consider the client's behavioral, physical and cognitive abilities in determining appropriateness of telepractice;
  - The practitioner should assess the ability of the client to safely and competently use electronic transmission equipment; and
  - The scope, nature and quality of services provided via telepractice should be comparable to those provided during in-person sessions.
6. May a practitioner licensed in Virginia provide services to a client located in another state?

The Virginia Board does not have jurisdiction over practice in another state. An audiologist or speech-language pathologist seeking to practice via telepractice with a client in another jurisdiction should contact the board for the other state to determine its licensure requirements.

7. Can a practitioner seek reimbursement for services provided by telepractice?

The Board has no jurisdiction over billing and reimbursement for services.