

Core General Standards of the American Telemedicine Association¹

Adopted by the Bahamas Medical Council

Administrative Standards

Organizations

1. Organizations providing services via telehealth shall follow the standard operating policies and procedures of the governing institution. If the telehealth operation is a sole entity or part of a solo practice, that entity or solo practice shall have policies and procedures in place to govern all administrative functions that responsibly include and address aspects of telehealth with regards to:

- (a) Human resource management
- (b) Privacy and confidentiality
- (c) Federal, state and other credentialing and regulatory agency requirements
- (d) Fiscal management
- (e) Ownership of patient records
- (f) Documentation
- (g) Patient rights and responsibilities
- (h) Network security
- (i) Telehealth equipment use
- (j) Research protocols

1. Organizations providing telehealth programs shall have in place a systematic quality improvement and performance management process that complies with any organizational, regulatory, or accrediting, requirements for outcomes management.

2. Organizations and health professionals providing telehealth services shall ensure compliance with relevant legislation, regulations, and accreditation requirements for supporting patient/client decision-making and consent, including protection of patient health information.

3. Organizations shall have a mechanism in place for assuring that patients are aware of their rights and responsibilities with respect to accessing health care via telehealth technologies, including the process for communicating complaints.

¹These Core General Standards of the American Telemedicine Operations has been adopted in full by The Bahamas Medical Council.

4. Organizations shall integrate telehealth into the existing operational procedures for obtaining consent for treatment from patients and organizations shall provide a mechanism for additional informed consent when required for invasive procedures.

5. Organizations providing telehealth services that establish collaborative partnerships shall be aware of applicable legal and regulatory requirements for appropriate written agreements, memorandum of understanding, or contracts. Those contracts, agreements, etc., shall be based on the scope and application of the telehealth services offered, and, shall address all applicable administrative, clinical, and technical requirements.

Health Professionals

1. Health professionals providing telehealth services shall be fully licensed and registered with their respective regulatory/licensing bodies and with respect to the site where the patient is located, administrative, legislative, and regulatory requirements.

2. Professionals providing telehealth services shall be aware of credentialing requirements at the site where the consultant is located and the site where the patient is located, in compliance with and when required by regulatory and accrediting agencies.

3. Health professionals shall be aware of their locus of accountability and any/all requirements (including those for liability insurance) that apply when practicing telehealth in another jurisdiction.

4. Health professionals using telehealth shall be cognizant of when a provider-patient relationship has been established within the context of a telemedicine encounter between the health care provider and the patient, whether interactive or store-and-forward, and proceed accordingly with an evidence-based, best possible standard of care.

5. Health professionals providing telehealth services shall have the necessary education, training/orientation, and ongoing continuing education/professional development to ensure they possess the necessary competencies for the safe provision of quality health services in their specialty area.

Clinical Standards

1. The organization and health professionals shall be satisfied that health professionals providing care via telehealth are aware of their own professional discipline standards and those standards shall be upheld in the telehealth

encounter, considering the specific context, location and timing, and services delivered to the patient.

2. Health professionals shall be guided by professional discipline and national existing clinical practice guidelines when practicing via telehealth, and any modifications to specialty specific clinical practice standards for the telehealth setting shall ensure that clinical requirements specific to the discipline are maintained.

Technical Standards

1. Organizations shall ensure that equipment sufficient to support diagnostic needs is available and functioning properly at the time of clinical encounters.

2. Organizations shall have strategies in place to address the environmental elements of care necessary for the safe use of telehealth equipment.

3. Organizations shall comply with all relevant safety laws, regulations, and codes for technology and technical safety.

4. Organizations shall have infection control policies and procedures in place for the use of telehealth equipment and patient peripherals that comply with organizational, legal, and regulatory requirements.

5. Organizations providing telehealth services shall have policies and procedures in place to comply with local legislated and regulatory rules for protection of patient health information and to ensure the physical security of telehealth equipment and the electronic security of data.

6. Organizations shall have appropriate redundant systems in place that ensure availability of the network for critical connectivity.

7. Organizations shall have appropriate redundant clinical video and exam equipment for critical clinical encounters and clinical functions.

8. Organizations shall meet required published technical standards for safety and efficacy for devices that interact with patients or are integral to the diagnostic capabilities of the practitioner when and where applicable.

9. Organizations providing telehealth services shall have processes in place to ensure the safety and effectiveness of equipment through on-going maintenance.