Physical Therapy via Telehealth

TX PT Rules §322.5 addresses the provision of physical therapy services via telehealth. As long as a PT or PTA under the supervision of a PT abide by not only the telehealth rules but also all of the provisions of the PT Practice Act/Rules, they will be compliant with the licensure rules and regulations when providing physical therapy services via telehealth.

A pdf of the current PT Rules is available online at https://www.ptot.texas.gov/page/act-and-rules.

In response to recent phone calls/emails, the PT Board has developed the following FAQs in order to provide clarification of the telehealth rules:

**Can a PT/PTA who is licensed in TX provide physical therapy services via telehealth to a patient in another state?**

The TX PT Rules pertain to physical therapy services via telehealth provided to a patient who is physically located in Texas. Physical therapy services provided to a patient located in another state are governed by the physical therapy statutes and rules of that state.

**Can a PT/PTA located in another state provide physical therapy services via telehealth to a patient who is physically located in Texas?**

As long as the PT/PTA has either an unrestricted Texas license or a Compact Privilege to practice in Texas, they can provide physical therapy services via telehealth to a patient who is physically located in Texas regardless of their location.

**Can the informed consent be obtained verbally?**

Verbal consent is acceptable as long as you document that you are receiving verbal consent for patient/student name and the date the verbal consent is given. If the responsible party of the patient/student provides the consent, include the name and relationship to the patient/student in the documentation. The informed consent can be broad in nature to cover multiple sessions during the episode of care instead of obtaining consent for each session.

**Can an evaluation (reevaluation) be performed via telehealth?**

The PT is responsible for determining whether an evaluation (reevaluation) or intervention may be conducted via telehealth or must be conducted in an in-person setting.

**Does a reevaluation need to be performed to transition a patient’s physical therapy services to telehealth?**

Transitioning the physical therapy services of a patient to telehealth is just a change in the delivery mode for the continuation of the episode of care and would not necessarily require a reevaluation.
Is FaceTime and non-encrypted video permissible at this time per PT rules and regulations?

Since the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) of the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services has temporarily relaxed the requirements for HIPAA compliant telehealth platforms, it would not be a violation of the PT Practice Act/Rules to use those platforms during the COVID-19 nationwide public health emergency. More information on OCR enforcement discretion and HIPAA compliant telehealth platforms is available at https://www.hhs.gov/hipaa/for-professionals/special-topics/emergency-preparedness/notification-enforcement-discretion-telehealth/index.html.

Is physical therapy services via telehealth reimbursable? What are the telehealth codes for billing?

The PT Practice Act/Rules do not address billing/coding/reimbursement, and licensure authorization does not guarantee that a payer source will reimburse for the telehealth services. You should contact your payer source(s) for clarification on billing/reimbursement of physical therapy services provided via telehealth.

Additional information and resources are available through both the state and national physical therapy professional associations.

Texas Physical Therapy Association (TPTA) - https://tpta.memberclicks.net/covid-19-resources

American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) - http://www.apta.org/Telehealth/