

Medical facilities and educational settings across the United States are taking preemptive action to prevent exposure to and the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19). Many facilities are turning to telehealth as a mechanism for continuing to meet clients'/patients'/students' needs. For many providers, clients and other stakeholders this may be their first exposure to telehealth.

Use of telehealth must be equivalent to the quality of services provided in-person and consistent with adherence to the [Code of Ethics](#) (ASHA, 2016a), [Scope of Practice in Audiology](#) (ASHA, 2018), [Scope of Practice in Speech-Language Pathology](#) (ASHA, 2016b), state and federal laws and ASHA policy.

The SIG 18 Coordinating Committee is providing the following recommendations **before engaging in telehealth services**.

1. Consider the [appropriateness](#) of telehealth for meeting the needs of individuals.
2. The organization must have a **Business Associates Agreement (This is important if you want to be paid and for liability as well)** (BAA) with the videoconferencing company.
 1. A Business Associates Agreement (BAA) is an agreement between your videoconferencing company and your employer that assures that the transmission of information from provider to **client and client to provider is encrypted**. Encryption is necessary to provide the *first level* of compliance with HIPPA & FERPA laws. (See ASHA's [Telepractice Practice Portal page](#) for further information on HIPPA & FERPA). Encryption provides the SLP & employer a great assurance of providing client confidentiality.
 2. HOWEVER, A BAA IS NOT ENOUGH. To ensure that you are providing services that are compliant with HIPPA & FERPA you will need to implement the following:
 1. **a secure location** for providing services that is not interrupted (e.g., having others walk into the room where you are providing service)
 2. remote access to electronic **documentation must be considered to protect** client privacy and confidentiality at both sites.
3. Consult your [state's teacher certification and SLP/AuD licensure laws](#) regarding the use of telehealth
4. Verify that you **and** the [client have the necessary equipment and internet speed](#) to engage in a videoconference session.
5. Verify that someone will be physically present with the client/patient/student who can support your services. **This is a strong recommendation!**
6. Verify contact information for the client/patient/student including a phone number, email, physical address and relevant local emergency services. **In the event that you need to access help.**

ASHA members are encouraged to be informed and to advise stakeholders and other decision-makers on the implementation of telehealth.

Additional Resources Can Be Found At:

[ASHA Telehealth Practice Portal](#)

[ASHA SIG 18 Community](#)