



Southeast (HHS Region 4)

MHTTC

Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Network

Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

## **Region 4 Telemental Health Landscape in Response to COVID-19**

With HHS Region 4 public schools closed for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year, students are particularly vulnerable and may be at increased need for mental health services. State and federal authorities have enacted numerous reforms and extended sizeable budget allocations to help fill this need.

- The Coronavirus Aid, Rehabilitation, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) sets aside [\\$13.2 billion for K-12 schools](#) for services that include telemental health delivery to youth. The package also provides an additional \$100 million (through [US DOE Project SERV](#)) to support services such as mental health counseling.
- Region 4 State Medicaid agencies have expanded telemental health coverage by waiving restrictions on payment for services which require that the provider and patient be located at the same physical location at the time of the service.
- Some state mental health licensing boards have effectively expanded the workforce available to provide services by waiving restrictions on out-of-state licensed providers and clinical student providers.

This document presents a general landscape of state mental health licensing board responses to the COVID-19 public health emergency related to telemental health services and payment. It is important to note that many of these provisions are time-sensitive, and so may not remain in effect beyond the listed dates (or the date when states declare the end of the COVID-19 public health emergency).



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### HHS Region 4 Telemental Health Landscape and COVID-19 Responses

State	<a href="#">CARES ACT</a> allocation for schools (millions) <sup>1</sup>	Governors Emergency Education Relief Grants (millions) <sup>2</sup>	Medicaid Telemental Health Coverage <sup>3</sup>	Existing telehealth payment equity mandate for private insurers <sup>4</sup>
Alabama	\$210.4	<a href="#">\$47.5</a>	<a href="#">September 30, 2020</a>	No
Florida	\$724.2	\$171.5	Duration of COVID emergency	No
Georgia	\$448.3	\$106.2	Duration of COVID emergency	Yes
Kentucky	\$203.0	\$42.1	Duration of COVID emergency	Yes
Mississippi	\$174.4	\$177.6	Duration of COVID emergency	Yes
North Carolina	\$378.4	\$357.6	Duration of COVID emergency	No
South Carolina	\$204.0	\$159.0	Duration of COVID emergency	No
Tennessee	\$257.5	\$223.2	Duration of COVID emergency	Yes

<sup>1</sup> Funds are distributed through the Education Stabilization Fund and based on the share of Title I and Pell Grant students that attend school in each state.

<sup>2</sup> Funds are distributed to schools most impacted by COVID-19: 60% distributed based on share of national school-aged youth (i.e., 5-24 years); 40% based on share of Title I youth.

<sup>3</sup> Medicaid state offices have removed reimbursement site restrictions based on where the provider and patient are at the time of service.

<sup>4</sup> Requires private payers to reimburse telehealth services at the same rate as in-person services.



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**Expanding Workforce Available – Mental Health Workforce Deregulation by Provider Type**

State	Out of State Provider License Restriction Waivers <sup>5</sup>				Clinical Student Waivers			
	Counselor	Social Worker	Marriage Family Therapist	Psychologist	Counseling	Social Work	Marriage Family Therapy	Psychology
Alabama	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Florida	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	
Georgia								Y
Kentucky	Y	Y (R)	Y	Y				Y
Mississippi	Y (R)	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y
North Carolina	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
South Carolina	Y	Y (R)	Y (R)	Y (R)				
Tennessee		Y		Y				

Y = yes, waiver in place.

<sup>5</sup> Y (R), restrictions apply (e.g., providers must have an existing relationship with patient, or provider must hold a license in a specific neighboring state).



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Center for Connected Health Policy (April 20, 2020). "COVID-19 Related State Actions".

<https://www.cchpca.org/resources/covid-19-related-state-actions>

Centers for Medicaid & Medicare Services (March 17, 2020). "Medicare Telemedicine Healthcare Provider Fact Sheet".

<https://www.cms.gov/newsroom/fact-sheets/medicare-telemedicine-health-care-provider-fact-sheet>

Federation of State Medical Boards (April 23, 2020). "States Modifying In-State Licensure Requirements for Telehealth in Response to COVID-19".

<https://www.fsmb.org/siteassets/advocacy/pdf/states-waiving-licensure-requirements-for-telehealth-in-response-to-covid-19.pdf>

National Center for Youth Law (2020). "Mental Health COVID-19 Statement and Resources".

<https://youthlaw.org/mental-health-covid-19-statement/>

Supplee, L. and Crowne, S. (March 26, 2020). "During the COVID-19 pandemic, telehealth can help connect home visiting services to families"

<https://www.childtrends.org/during-the-covid-19-pandemic-telehealth-can-help-connect-home-visiting-services-to-families>