

Telehealth in the Child and Adolescent Health Center – Frequently Asked Questions

Why do we need telehealth? We care about keeping our students healthy. Student health impacts school performance and attendance. And it is not uncommon for a student to miss an extra day or two waiting for an appointment or for the parent to miss time from work. In the many communities our program serves, parents also face problems such as a shortage of medical providers, as well as lack of transportation options for their child. Tele-health allows us to bring a healthcare provider (virtually) to your child when and where they need it most: in the school where it's easier for everyone.

What is telehealth?

Telehealth is a way to connect your child to medical care while your child is at school. The connection is a secure, two-way video session with your child and the health center nurse on one end, and a nurse practitioner (NP), physicians' assistant (PA), or doctor (MD/DO) at another health center on the other end. During a visit, your child can be screened, examined, diagnosed, treated, and monitored using special video and audio equipment. This equipment gives the NP, PA or doctor the ability to examine your child's ears, eyes, nose, throat, lungs, skin, etc. -Using telehealth, children can be seen for many common concerns like: *cuts/abrasions, rashes, pink eye, coughs/colds, strep throat, earaches, and the flu*, among other things!

Are there any concerns that can't be seen using telehealth?

Life-threatening conditions, and conditions that require the provider to be in the room with the patient (i.e. a stomach ache) should not be treated using telehealth. The clinic nurse will use state guidelines, school district policies, and professional practice guidelines to help decide the best way to help your child if they have these concerns.

How does telehealth improve health care for my family?

When you receive a call from the school telling you that your child is sick, you might not be able to leave your job right away. With your permission, your child can have a telehealth visit without leaving the school. This saves gas and work time. A call from our medical provider will give you the information you need to care for your child. The provider can also send any needed prescriptions to the pharmacy of your choice. A parent or guardian will be informed of the findings, treatment, and recommendations once the visit is over. Your child's primary care provider will also be notified of the visit. Of course, if you are able, you are always welcome to attend the telehealth visit.

How will I be billed for the visit?

Billing occurs after the visit, as normal. Following your child's visit, information will be submitted to your insurance company. For students without insurance, services will be provided on a sliding scale based on income information provided. We do not refuse care to anyone based on their ability to pay.

Questions and Answers Continued...

Question: What illnesses can be diagnosed with telehealth?

Answer: Allergy symptoms, bronchitis, skin rashes, cuts/abrasions, lice, ear infections, pink eye, sinus infections, strep throat, respiratory infections, and possibly visits for well-checks and chronic illnesses such as asthma. In addition, influenza tests and quick strep tests can be administered for a faster diagnosis.

Question: Who will see my child?

Answer: A licensed healthcare provider who specializes in the care of children. In our centers, this is usually a Nurse Practitioner (NP) or Physicians' Assistant (PA) at the main school-based clinic in your community.

Question: How does Telehealth work?

Answer: The NP or PA, along with the health center nurse, will examine your child via a secure television/internet connection using a special camera to examine eyes, ears, throat, and/or skin. A special stethoscope is used to listen to the lungs.

Question: Can I be there with my child?

Answer: After the initial screening, the health center nurse will call you for permission to do a telehealth visit, if it is found that one is needed. At that time, you may request to be present for the exam. If the health center nurse is unable to contact you, a full explanation of findings and treatment will be reported to you by phone after the visit.

Question: What if I don't have insurance for my child?

Answer: The health center nurse will assist you in applying for State of Michigan Health Insurance (MI Child/Healthy Kids). If you do not qualify, your child will be placed on a sliding fee scale which bases payment on income. However, we do not refuse care to anyone based on their ability to pay for it.

Question: How does my child get medicine if they need it?

Answer: During the Telehealth visit, if it is determined your child will need medicine, the health center provider or nurse will send the prescription to the pharmacy of your choice. You will be able to pick up the medicine at your pharmacy shortly after this. Usually prescriptions are covered completely, or for a small cost, by your insurance. Please let the health center nurse know if you are having trouble getting the medication you need. We may be able to help you!

Question: How do I sign my child up for the Telehealth Program?

Answer: Each health center and school will have permission forms for you to fill out in the main office, or the school-based health center. If you have questions or need assistance with your application, please ask your health center staff for help. If you have already signed up with the health center, then you are already signed up for telehealth!

Question: Are there other ways this project benefits my family and my school?

Answer: Students can be seen by a health center provider without leaving their school! Immunizations, sports physicals, and visits to manage chronic illness (i.e., diabetes, asthma, etc.) can be done in your child's school, without having to transport him/her to another facility for the visit. This saves time, and limits risks to your child that may occur by transporting them to another health center.

Question: Are their services that are NOT available through the Telehealth Program?

Answer: Yes. As stated before, some visits are not appropriate for telehealth. The health center nurse will decide if your child's concern can be addressed with a telehealth visit. In addition, **Michigan law** does not the provider to give prescriptions or samples of birth control or condoms on school property.

Question: How will my primary care provider be notified of a visit?

Answer: Each child seen at the health center will have a summary of the visit sent to your primary care provider, as appropriate. This summary will include the diagnosis, medication prescribed, and the recommended follow-up sent via email/fax/U.S. mail. The health center will attempt to work closely with your child's current primary care provider. Students without a primary care provider will be assisted in a referral to one, as needed.