

SUBJECT: Revisions to Sunsetting ACOFP Position Statements - Telemedicine

SUBMITTED BY: ACOFP Federal Legislation Committee

REFERRED TO: 2019 ACOFP Congress of Delegates

RESOLUTION NO. 4

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2 WHEREAS, the 2018 Congress of Delegates of the American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians (ACOFP)
3 referred the ACOFP Telemedicine Position Statement to the ACOFP Washington office for review and
4 report to 2019 Congress.
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6 RESOLVED, that Federal Legislation Committee of the American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians
7 (ACOFP) will revise the ACOFP Telemedicine Position Statement as follows.

8 Telemedicine – Definition of Telemedicine – Telemedicine is an area of medicine that utilizes
9 information and telecommunication technology to transfer medical information that assists in the
10 diagnosis, treatment, and education of the patient. The provision of telemedicine requires the same skills
11 and time as the delivery of that service in-person.
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13 Benefits of Telemedicine – Telemedicine may be an effective tool to increase access, improve quality of
14 care, and reduce burdens for family physicians, especially when utilized for patients in rural and/or
15 underserved areas.
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17 Current Barriers to Telemedicine – There are a number of barriers to the adoption of telemedicine
18 including inadequate reimbursement that disincentivizes the provision of telemedicine as well as
19 insufficient or limited broadband connectivity, making it difficult for both physicians and patients to
20 leverage telemedicine. Other barriers include: current payer and payment rules that were established
21 before telemedicine existed; requirements related to the settings (i.e., facility type) and locations (i.e.,
22 rural or urban) of physicians and patients for telemedicine services to be approved; new payer and
23 payment rules limiting the availability of telemedicine services (e.g., rules related to types of patients
24 who may receive telehealth services, rules limiting whether a patient may receive related in-person care
25 within a time period after receiving telehealth); and variations in statutory and regulatory requirements
26 and payment at the state level.
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28 Promoting Increased Use and Availability of Telemedicine – Recent federal legislative and regulatory
29 activities have attempted to increase the availability of telemedicine within the existing Medicare
30 payment systems by providing flexibility both on who may receive coverage for telemedicine services as
31 well as the location of where the services are provided. More needs to be done to incentivize the
32 widespread adoption of telemedicine and to provide for adequate reimbursement for these services.
33 Specifically, payers, including Medicare, must recognize that telemedicine does not reduce the amount of
34 time a physician spends with patients; it provides patients with greater access to health care services.
35 The ACOFP supports federal efforts to promote the widespread adoption of telemedicine.