



## **Call to Action**

Why should people support the bill for permanent access to telehealth for therapy?

The Expanded Telehealth Access Act of 2021 (H.R. 2168) has been introduced by Reps. Mikie Sherrill, D-N.J., and David McKinley, R-W.Va., in the House of Representatives. This bipartisan bill would permanently make physical therapy services and other rehabilitation services available and billable under Medicare for visits completed via telehealth. This policy was temporarily put into place during the pandemic and will expire unless this legislation is passed.

This legislation is supported by the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA), the Vestibular Disorders Association (VeDA), and many other organizations because of the expanded scope of care and flexibility it offers. Use of telehealth during the pandemic has shown us how well it increases access to rehab and medical services. The convenience of completing a telehealth visit will also be important for individuals with dizziness when the global pandemic ends. Not having to worry about driving to an appointment can mean fewer missed appointments and greater continuity of care. Making access to healthcare via telehealth permanent for Medicare beneficiaries will allow this to continue and serve you when you most need help from a specialist.

Let's show our support and make this permanent. Please take a moment to contact your representative by filling out the form below. Thank you for advocating for yourself and others who will benefit from greater access to medical care!

## **Letter to Representative**

As your constituent, I ask that you to please co-sponsor the Expanded Telehealth Access Act of 2021 (H.R. 2168), which would make permanent the current temporary policy that allows physical therapists and physical therapist assistants to deliver and bill for services provided via telehealth under Medicare. This bipartisan legislation was introduced by Rep. Mikie Sherrill, D-N.J., and David McKinley, R-W.Va.

The public health emergency expanded section 1135 waivers, which temporarily allowed physical therapy services to be furnished via telehealth by physical therapists and physical therapist assistants.



L I F E   R E B A L A N C E D

Physical therapy is ideal for telehealth because it expands access and allows for flexibility in delivery when patients need it most. This reduces patient cancellations, disruption of care, and promotes equity in patient populations. PTs and PTAs can use telehealth in many ways, such as a supplement to in-person services to evaluate and treat a variety of conditions prevalent in the Medicare population. This includes vestibular disorders, conditions which can be a top reason for falls in the Medicare population. By accessing physical therapy via telehealth, fall risk can be reduced and possibly reduce the cost of medical care needed by a Medicare beneficiary. Other conditions that can also be addressed by physical therapy via telehealth include arthritis, multiple sclerosis, musculoskeletal conditions, Parkinson disease, pelvic floor dysfunction, frailty, and sarcopenia.

PTs and PTAs have been successfully using telehealth under Medicare throughout the pandemic to ensure access and provide flexibility for patients. Physical therapists have been assessing fall risk in the home, reducing the frequency of missed visits, evaluating additional social determinants of health, and providing at-home adjustments to care that cannot be replicated in a clinic. Physical therapy via telehealth has also increased access for the Medicare populations who often lack transportation, economic resources, and proximity to care.

I strongly encourage Congress to enact H.R. 2168 to add physical therapists, physical therapist assistants, and other providers of therapy services such as occupational therapy and speech language pathology, as authorized providers of telehealth under Medicare.

I urge you to promote permanent telehealth expansion for physical therapy by cosponsoring H.R. 2168. Thank you for your consideration.