

Arkansas State Board of Physical Therapy

Pursuant to the Arkansas Telemedicine Act, Ark. Code Ann. §§ 17-80-401 et seq., the following rule applies to the provision of services via telehealth by physical therapists and physical therapy assistants when acting within their respective scopes of practice.

I. Requirement for all services provided by physical therapists using telehealth:

1. A professional relationship shall be established in compliance with this rule to provide physical therapy services through telehealth.
2. Once a professional relationship is established, a licensee may provide healthcare services through telehealth, including interactive audio, if the healthcare services are within the physical therapy scope of practice.
3. The practice of physical therapy via telehealth shall be held to the same standards of care as traditional in-person encounters.
4. All licensees providing care via telemedicine to a patient located within the State of Arkansas shall be licensed to practice physical therapy in the State of Arkansas.
5. Licensees utilizing telehealth must follow applicable state/federal laws regarding informed consent, HIPAA, medical records and confidentiality, and fraud/waste/abuse.
6. If a decision is made to provide physical therapy through telehealth, the physical therapist accepts responsibility and liability for the care of the patient.

II. Patient/ Physical Therapist Relationship

1. For purposes of this regulation, a professional relationship, at a minimum, requires that:
 - A. The licensee performs a history and an “in person” physical examination of the

patient adequate to establish a diagnosis and identify underlying conditions and/or contraindications to the treatment recommended/provided, OR

B. The licensee personally knows the patient and the patient's general health status through an "ongoing" personal or professional relationship; and

C. Appropriate follow-up be provided or arranged, when necessary, at medically necessary intervals.

2. For the purposes of this regulation, a professional relationship is deemed to exist in the following situations:

A. When treatment is provided in consultation with, or upon referral by, another healthcare professional who has an ongoing relationship with the patient, and who has agreed to supervise the patient's treatment, including follow up care and the use of any prescribed medications.

B. On-call or cross-coverage situations arranged by the patient's treating physical therapist.

3. "Professional relationship" does not include a relationship between a licensee and a patient established only by the following:

A. An internet questionnaire;

B. An email message;

C. Patient-generated medical history;

D. Audio-only communication, including without limitation interactive audio;

E. Text messaging;

F. A facsimile machine; or

G. Any combination thereof.