

Telehealth Tips for Behavioral Health Assessment Officers

When a provider-to-patient telehealth consultation with a psychiatrist at another location is needed, the Behavioral Health Assessment Officer (BHAO) facilitates the video visit at the rural hospital using on-site technology and broadband. Below are tips for the BHAO and colleagues on using telehealth as a tool to connect patients with a specialist.

Location and technology

- Mobile device such as tablet
- Secure video conferencing platform
- Using a space that provides privacy
- Preventing interruptions and distractions such as noise
- Paying attention to positioning of mobile device, volume levels, lighting
- Having a backup strategy in case of technical issues at either site (e.g., phone as backup)

Explaining the process

- Describing how the video consultation works
- Explaining how technology is used
- Noting confidentiality of the patient's information and visit
- Making sure patient knows they can decline visit
- Inviting questions
- Obtaining necessary informed consent

Facilitation

- Checking in with patient about comfort with technology
- Introducing patient and psychiatrist
- Setting a comfortable tone
- Addressing questions/concerns
- Follow-up discussion

Telehealth resources for rural hospitals

- Health Resources and Services Administration [telehealth website](#)
- Rural Health Information Hub [Rural Telehealth Toolkit](#)
- For implementation assistance, [National Consortium of Telehealth Resource Centers](#)
- For broadband/internet, Universal Service Administrative Co.'s [Rural Health Care](#) program for providers and facilities
- [Center for Connected Health Policy](#)

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