



Telehealth and Remote Treatment

Technological advancements in the last 20 years have dramatically altered the delivery of healthcare services in this country. These services may involve a number of modalities, including the following:

- Live video
- Store-and-forward transmission of healthcare information
- Remote patient monitoring
- Mobile health
- Mail-order treatment

Through the internet – and with judicious application – many patients are now able to receive remote treatment from healthcare providers, granting access to much-needed care and services previously out of reach. However, not all healthcare services are adequately and safely provided through these modes of practice.

Healthcare treatment by its very nature can be unpredictable. Seemingly simple conditions or procedures may appear to be capable of remote management, but, in reality, a more complex condition may be present and unidentifiable through remote evaluation. Failure to appropriately diagnose and treat these conditions may result in lifelong health issues or even death.

Oral and maxillofacial surgery is the specialty of dentistry that includes the diagnosis and surgical and adjunctive treatment of diseases, injuries and defects involving both the functional and esthetic aspects of the hard and soft tissues of the oral and maxillofacial regions. AAOMS believes remote treatment of any oral and maxillofacial surgical condition is inappropriate. Such treatment requires the in-person presence of an oral and maxillofacial surgeon and establishment of a direct provider-patient relationship.

AAOMS further believes any remote treatment of a patient through telehealth modalities in other areas of care – and when deemed medically appropriate – should be performed by a healthcare provider licensed in the same state as the patient, practicing under the scope of his or her license and in accordance with state law. In addition, AAOMS believes it is inappropriate for an out-of-state practitioner to “talk through” a lesser-trained practitioner who is performing services on a patient who are typically considered outside their scope of practice.

While technology continues to grow and change medicine and dentistry, practitioners must continue to be directly involved in patient treatment utilizing sound, evidence-based methods – regardless of the modality – to ensure patients receive the level of care deserved by all Americans.

Reaffirmed January 2020, AAOMS Committee on Government Affairs

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