

Washington State Telehealth Capacity Assessment

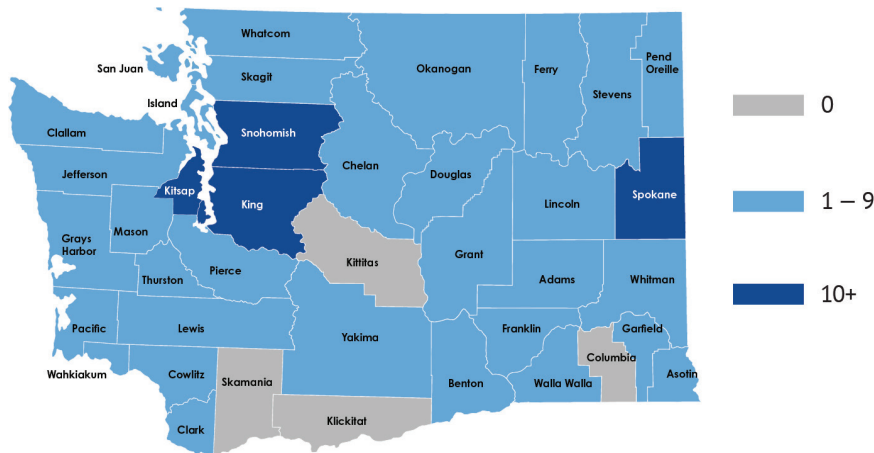
Provider Perspectives on Telehealth in Washington

In September 2016, the Washington State Department of Health's Children with Special Health Care Needs Program was awarded the Autism Spectrum Disorder and Developmental Disabilities (AS3D) federal grant. The goal of the grant work is to ensure early diagnosis and entry into services for children with autism spectrum disorder and other developmental disabilities, with a focus on medically underserved and rural populations. One mechanism for increasing diagnosis and access is telehealth. Telehealth encompasses a broad variety of technologies and tactics to deliver virtual medical, health, and education services; telehealth is not a specific service, but a collection of means to enhance care and education delivery. Program staff are working to maximize existing telehealth laws and other infrastructure to increase access to services and to facilitate communication and capacity building among providers. In order to better understand the current landscape for telehealth among medical providers, a survey was conducted in summer 2017 to determine how widely telehealth services are being offered and to better understand the barriers that limit telehealth utilization.

Who Took the Survey

Out of 52 total respondents, 19 identified as applied behavioral analysis (ABA) providers, 22 as centers of excellence for autism (COEs), and 10 as neurodevelopmental centers (NDCs) (non-mutually exclusive categories). Counties served by the most respondents included King (19), Spokane (17), Snohomish (13), and Kitsap (11). Counties not covered included Columbia, Kittitas, Klickitat, and Skamania. The populations served ranged from 0–100% Medicaid coverage. Overall, a wide variety of health care providers responded to this survey.

Number of Provider Survey Respondents by County



DEFINITIONS

mHealth

A form of telemedicine using wireless devices and cell phone technologies.

Telementoring

The practice of developing mentorship relationships between learners and those with more experience in a particular subject or area of expertise; experts are geographically removed from learners and use web and phone-based methods to interact

Telehealth

A variety of technologies and tactics to deliver virtual medical, health, and education services. For the purposes of this survey, the term “telehealth” will encompass the concepts of telemedicine, telehealth, mHealth, and tele-mentoring.

Acronyms

ABA Applied Behavioral Analysis

COE Centers of Excellence for Autism Diagnosis

NDC Neurodevelopmental Center

CYSHCN Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs

TA Technical Assistance

AS3D Autism Spectrum Disorder and Developmental Disabilities (federal grant)

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For additional information, email cshcn.support@doh.wa.gov, or call (360) 236-3507.



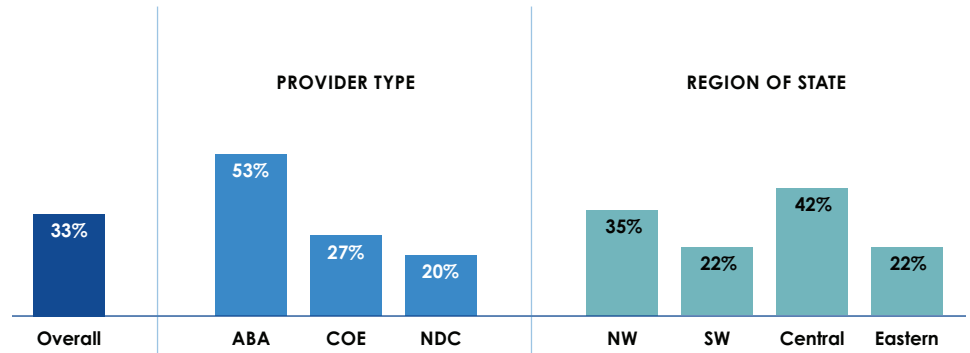
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Telehealth in Washington

Seventeen of the 52 providers surveyed, roughly one-third, currently offer telehealth services. The most commonly reported services provided include family training, ABA treatment, ABA supervision, NDC consultation, education, diagnosis, and staff training. (See chart to the right)

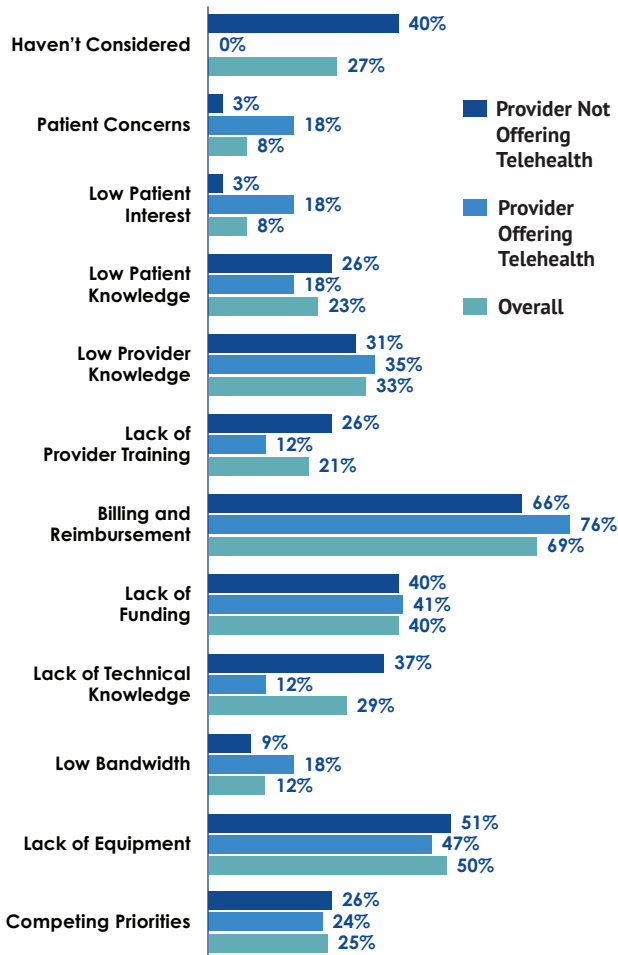
Percentage of Providers Offering Any Telehealth



Barriers and Challenges

The graph below shows the prevalence of commonly reported barriers to telehealth, separated by responding providers' current self-reported telehealth capacity. Providers who don't offer telehealth were more likely to be concerned about patient knowledge, provider training, and lack of technical knowledge. Providers who offer telehealth were more likely to indicate patient concerns and billing or reimbursement as challenges.

Reported Barriers to Providing Telehealth



Other noted concerns included HIPAA compliance and confidentiality, patient trust, potential revenue loss, and organizational capacity to institute a large scale change.

Concerns specific to billing, a known challenge for many providers, included challenges identifying proper billing codes, inconsistent reimbursement policies from insurance providers, different coverage policies depending on service type/classification (i.e., mental health and behavioral health are billed separately in Washington).

Interest in Technical Assistance

One of the goals of the AS3D grant is to provide technical assistance to help providers maximize telehealth to reach historically medically underserved populations. Seventy-two percent of respondents reported interest in technical assistance on billing and reimbursement, while 56 percent indicated interest in assistance on telehealth policy in Washington. Thanks to the information provided by respondents to this survey, targeted trainings and educational materials are being developed to help bring telehealth a little closer to you!

To access the Telehealth Capacity Assessment full report and the executive summary, please go to:

<https://www.doh.wa.gov/YouandYourFamily/InfantsandChildren/HealthandSafety/ChildrenwithSpecialHealthCareNeeds/Publications>