

Goals of the Uniform Telehealth Act

- To improve access to care through greater use of telemedicine and the number of providers allowed to treat patients through telemedicine
- To create uniformity in the definition of telemedicine and the technology used to provide care across states

Section by section review of the 2023 bill and substitute bill

Section	SB 5481	SSB 5481
2: Definitions	Establishes definitions include defining "out-of-state healthcare practitioner" and "registered healthcare practitioner"	Removed definitions related to out-of-state and registered practitioners, added a definition of store and forward technology, and added "store and forward" as part of the "telemedicine services" definition
3: Scope	The bill applies to telemedicine services provided to patients located in WA only	No change
4 & 5: Telemedicine authorization and practice standards	A licensed provider may provide telemedicine services consistent with their scope of practice, provided that the services meet the same practice standards as providing in-person care	No change

Section by section review continued

Section	SB 5481	SSB 5481
6: Out-of-state healthcare practitioners	Allows out-of-state practitioners to provide telemedicine services to WA residents if: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• They are licensed in WA;• They complete a registration process established in the bill; or• The service is in the form of a consultation with a provider who has a patient-provider relationship with the patient or for a specialty diagnosis or treatment recommendation	Maintained this section but removed the reference to the registration process.
7: Registration	Requires disciplinary authorities to register out-of-state practitioners if they meet certain requirements, allowing them to provide telemedicine in WA	Removed the entire section

Section by section review continued

Section	SB 5481	SSB 5481
8: Discipline	Authorizes disciplinary authorities to discipline registered practitioners	Removed the entire section
9: Duties of registered practitioners	Requires registered practitioners to report disciplinary action, maintain insurance, and prohibits opening an office in the state	Removed the entire section
10-13: Other provisions	These sections relate to venue for lawsuits, rulemaking authority, statutory construction, and severability	No changes

Outstanding Issues

- Whether Washington should adopt a registration system for out-of-state providers to provide telemedicine services to Washington residents
- Whether a patient-provider relationship may be established through telemedicine
 - Language allowing this was not included in the Senate bill
- Whether a disciplinary authority may adopt rules that establish a different professional practice standard for telemedicine services or limits the types of technology that may be used for telemedicine services
 - Language prohibiting authorities from establishing such rules was not included in Senate bill

Questions for the Collaborative

- Does the Collaborative recommend adopting a registration process as proposed in the bill, and if so, would additional safeguards to address patient safety and quality of care concerns be needed?
- Does the Collaborative recommend allowing a patient-provider relationship to be established through telemedicine?