

Continuing access to care via audio-only telehealth services

Audio-only telehealth helps people access critical health care services — especially in Greater Minnesota.

Challenge

Medical Assistance and MinnesotaCare enrollees who get essential mental and physical health care services by phone will lose that access on July 1, 2025. That’s when current state authority for audio-only telehealth services ends.

The Legislature and Governor Walz approved telehealth in 2021 to help Minnesota residents access health care. During the state’s COVID-19 peacetime emergency, providers could provide care to public health care program enrollees by phone. The state extended the audio-only provision through June 2025 to allow for more study of telehealth.

The 2024 [study](#) from the departments of Human Services and Health recommended continuing audio-only telehealth. The study also endorsed payment parity for audio-only telehealth.

Proposal

The Governor’s budget proposes extending access to audio-only telehealth services through June 30, 2027.

Why it’s important

Audio-only telehealth helps people access critical health care services, particularly in Greater Minnesota. The ability to get health care services by phone has helped many state residents maintain access to care. This access is significant for those who live in rural areas, have limited mobility or lack access to transportation.

Access for underserved families and communities

Audio-only telehealth helps address access issues for rural communities and people who don't have the technology required for audiovisual telehealth. It helps them get essential behavioral health care and ensures accessible follow-up visits or monitoring.

Inclusivity for all Minnesotans

An evaluation of audio-only telehealth using data from the U.S. Census Bureau's Health Pulse Survey found that almost 50% of people of color used audio-only to access telehealth, compared with 38% of white patients.

For More Information

[Extend Access to Audio-Only Telehealth](#)
[Governor's Revised Budget Recommendations for Human Services](#)