

Restrictions on Tele-Health Lifted to Ease COVID-19 Strain



The Office for Civil Rights (OCR) at the U.S Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) announced it is lifting penalties for healthcare providers that use telehealth during the [COVID-19 crisis](#) that violates HIPAA regulations.

The lift of restrictions is enabling healthcare providers to have a wider reach to patients at a time when some patients can't travel.

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"We are empowering medical providers to serve patients wherever they are during this national public health emergency. We are especially concerned about reaching those most at risk, including older persons and persons with disabilities," said Roger Severino, OCR Director.

The waiver applies to communication third-party apps such as Apple FaceTime, Facebook Messenger video chat, Google Hangouts video or Skype used in "good faith" to consult with patients who are unable or unwilling to visit a doctor's surgery.

The OCR is further issuing guidance to providers using telehealth to help them use the technology responsibly. This includes advising patients that the apps do not conform with the [HIPAA privacy framework](#) and enabling encrypting and privacy modes during tele-consultations.

Telehealth is proving its worth during the crisis especially in reaching vulnerable people like older patients and those with disabilities.

Source: [U.S Department of Health and Human Services](#).

Image credit: [Pixabay](#)

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