

Providers must understand legal limits of telemedicine

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(HealthDay)—In order to minimize risk when practicing telemedicine, providers should ensure they hold the proper medical licenses, have medical liability insurance coverage, and communicate with patients regarding the potential risks of telemedicine, according to a report published in *Medical Economics*.

The authors emphasize the importance of understanding all applicable legal limits with respect to telemedicine. Providers should ensure that they have the correct medical licenses; in general, state laws require a physician treating a patient via telemedicine to be licensed by the state where the patient resides. Through the Interstate Medical Licensure Compact, physicians licensed in one of the 11 states in the compact can become licensed in the others.

Telemedicine [providers](#) must conform to a standard of care that is

applicable and equivalent to the expected in-person care, based on patient age and presenting condition. Although typically the provider would be held to the standard of care of the community where he or she practices, the courts have increasingly recognized standards promoted by associations such as the American Telemedicine Association. Providers should also check their malpractice [insurance coverage](#) to determine whether it includes telemedicine services; most professional liability insurance coverage excludes such coverage. In addition, providers should communicate with patients to ensure they understand risks such as power failure and potential exposure to outside hackers.

"Potential [telemedicine](#) providers need to understand what legal limits apply," according to the article. "Many states impose requirements on the treatment of patients. Therefore, it is critical that providers understand all applicable legal limits."

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