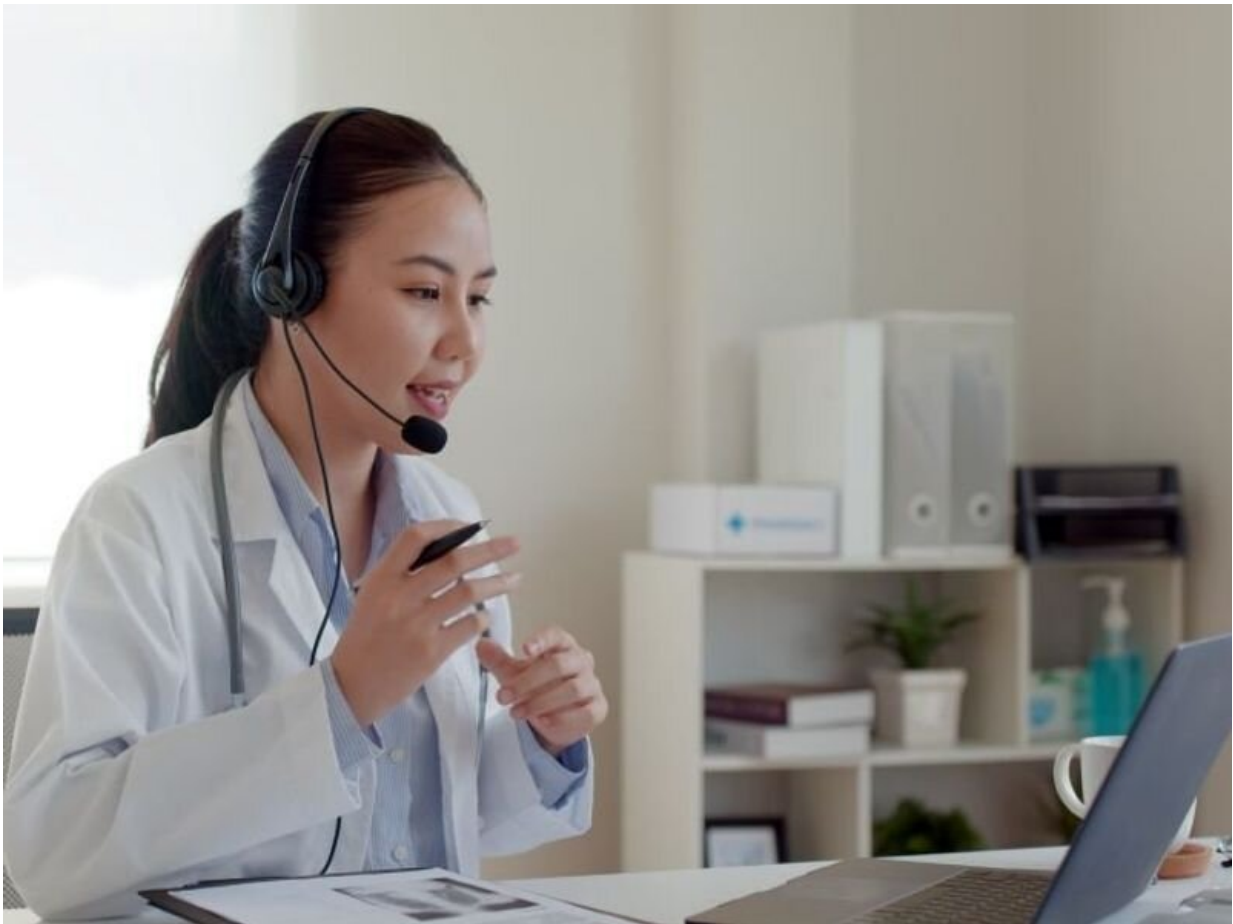


DEA extends telemedicine for prescribing controlled meds as pandemic measures end

May 10 2023, by Cara Murez



The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration on Wednesday [issued](#) a six-

month extension for people seeking to fill controlled medication prescriptions via telehealth.

That ability had been set to expire along with the ending of the pandemic public health emergency on May 11.

"These medications, including those used to treat [opioid use disorder](#), are a vital form of care for millions of Americans who have come to rely on safe and effective [telemedicine](#) appointments," [Dr. Bobby Mukkamala](#), chair of the American Medical Association's Substance Use and Pain Care Task Force, said in a [statement](#).

"Patients being treated with these medications often have challenges securing and traveling to in-person appointments. We are grateful the DEA is approaching this issue with the gravity it deserves, and we look forward to reviewing the details of the policy when they become available," Mukkamala added.

Prior to the pandemic, [patients](#) had to see a doctor for at least one in-person appointment before being able to access prescriptions for a long list of medications, including stimulants for [attention deficit hyperactivity disorder](#), benzodiazepines for anxiety, and medications for opioid use disorder, sleep or pain.

The DEA had offered proposals on March 1 that would allow prescribers to prescribe one 30-day supply of these controlled medications or the opioid use disorder buprenorphine without an in-person exam. Then an exam would be required before the next prescription.

In the public comment period ending in March, the DEA received 38,000 messages about the proposals, *CNN* reported.

The extension through Nov. 11, 2023 gives the DEA and the U.S.

Department of Health and Human Services the chance to consider the revisions and the public comments.

. "We take those comments seriously and are considering them carefully," [DEA Administrator Anne Milgram](#) said in an agency [news release](#). "We recognize the importance of telemedicine in providing Americans with access to needed medications, and we have decided to extend the current flexibilities for six months while we work to find a way forward to give Americans that access with appropriate safeguards."

The extension also allows that "if a patient and a practitioner have established a telemedicine relationship on or before November 11, 2023, the same telemedicine flexibilities that governed the relationship to that point are permitted until November 11, 2024," according to the DEA.

That will hold true unless there are new rules in place by then contradicting that, *CNN* reported.

More information: The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has [more](#) on the end of the public health emergency.

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