

POLICY

SOMERSET COUNTY
BOARD OF EDUCATION

Date Submitted: October 21, 2025	Number: 600-50
Date Reviewed: October 21, 2025	
Subject: Telehealth	Date Approved: Date Revised: Date Effective:

1. Purpose

To establish guidelines for school health services that will address the availability for student participation in telehealth appointments during the school day in secondary schools.

2. Policy Statement

In 2024, the Maryland General Assembly passed **House Bill (HB) 522, - Public Schools - Telehealth Appointments - State Guidelines, Policies, and Access (Md. Code, Education Educ. § 4-143)**, which was signed by Governor Wes Moore in April 2024. This Education Article requires boards of education to adopt and implement a student telehealth policy that allows for student participation in telehealth appointments during the school day and on the premises of public middle and high schools.

3. Definitions

- A. **Telehealth Services**—A mode of delivering health care services through the use of digital communications by a health care practitioner to a patient at a different physical location than the health care practitioner.
- B. **Parent/Student-Initiated Telehealth**—Telehealth services between a student (with or without their parent) and a health care practitioner external to a school when the LEA has no formal agreement with the health care practitioner to provide services to its students.

- C. **School/Practitioner-Initiated Telehealth**—Telehealth services between a student (with or without their parent) and a health care practitioner external to a school when the LEA has a formal agreement with the health care practitioner to provide health care services to its students.
- D. **Parent**- A parent of a student and includes a biological or adoptive parent, a legal guardian, or an individual acting as a parent in the absence of a parent or a legal guardian. Parents, for purposes of this definition, include individuals with legal rights or a lawful court order.
- E. **Parent Informed Consent**- An understanding by the parent/legal guardian of the telehealth services being provided by their health care practitioner, the purpose of telehealth, the technology to be used for the telehealth service, and any potential risks or benefits associated with the telehealth service. For the purposes of this administrative regulation, a written request for telehealth services submitted to the student's school serves as the parent's/legal guardian's informed consent.
- F. **Acute Medical Care**— A medical appointment to address a sudden, short-term illness or injury that needs prompt medical care, but is not necessarily a life-threatening emergency (i.e., urgent care need).
- G. **Behavioral/Mental Health Crisis**—A situation in which a person's actions, feelings, and behaviors can lead to them hurting themselves or others or put them at risk of being unable to care for themselves or function in a healthy manner (i.e., suicidal, homicidal, etc.)
- H. **Health Care Practitioner**- A licensed professional who provides health care services and practices within the scope of their state laws and guidelines.
- I. **Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) Compliance**— National standards for protected health information (PHI) that include its use, disclosure, and security. HIPPA applies to covered entities, such as healthcare providers, health plans, healthcare clearinghouses, as well as business associates who work with them.
- J. **Property**- Any school or other facility owned or operated by the Board of Education.
- K. **Personally Owned Electronic Devices**—Any electronic device that is owned by a student or their parent/guardian and not provided by the school or institution. This includes, but is not limited to, smartphones, tablets, laptops, and smartwatches used to access telehealth services.

4. Guidelines

A. *Equity and Prioritization of Access to Telehealth Appointments*

1. In accordance with Policy 600-47–Equity Policy, all students should have equitable access to participate in telehealth appointments in school, including students with disabilities.
2. Telehealth services shall support both the health and educational outcomes of students. For students with Individualized Education Programs or 504 Plans, schools shall ensure that telehealth services, if appropriate, complement students' accommodation(s) or service(s).

3. School staff are not equipped to safely support appointments for acute medical care or behavioral/mental health crises. These appointments must take place outside of the school building.
4. Student participation in telehealth appointments may only occur on the property of middle and high schools; they are not permitted in primary or elementary schools.
5. To ensure equitable access and to preserve student instructional time, each school principal may, on a case-by-case basis, limit the number of telehealth appointments for a student over the course of the school year. Additionally each school principal has the authority to determine a specific schedule of days of the week and/or times in which telehealth appointments will be available during the instructional day at their school.

B. Confidentiality

1. Staff supporting students participating in telehealth appointments shall comply with the legal requirements and obligations for student privacy and confidentiality (i.e., HIPAA).
2. Schools shall ensure that the location(s) chosen for students to participate in telehealth appointments are private.
3. Private information may need to be shared in order for school staff to facilitate a student's participation in a telehealth appointment and to ensure student safety.
4. Parents and students who participate in telehealth appointments in schools should be aware of the limits of privacy.

C. Parental and Student Informed Consent

1. Telehealth services during the school day will only be considered with the parent's/legal guardian's written informed consent.
2. The consent form will outline the terms of telehealth services.
3. If the student and/or parent(s)/guardian(s) violate the terms of the consent form, telehealth services may be terminated.

D. Communication and Coordination of Services

1. Prior to engaging in school/practitioner-initiated services, the school will develop a written communication agreement between the parent(s)/guardian(s) and school. The signed agreement will provide information on specific procedures for scheduling, the supervision of the student during the telehealth session, and the steps to take if the student goes into crisis during a telehealth session, including adherence to Somerset County Public School's policies, regulations, and procedures.

E. In-Person Support Protocols

1. **For Parent/Student-Initiated Telehealth:** The parent/legal guardian must be present in person during the telehealth appointment and inform their student's health care practitioner of their requirement to be present in person for the entire duration of the appointment. The parent/legal guardian is responsible for providing supervision of their student during the telehealth appointment.

2. **School/Practitioner-Initiated Telehealth:** A staff member must be in close proximity of the student's telehealth appointment to provide supervision.
3. Students that miss instruction due to a telehealth appointment will be responsible for making up the work. In the event that a student misses an entire class period, the teacher may note the student as absent from class and any missed class will be coded as "medical" and considered excused.
4. The parent/legal guardian or student is responsible for requesting make-up work from a teacher for any class(es) missed as a result of a telehealth appointment.

F. *Provision of Services*

1. Students who participate in telehealth services should adhere to policy 500-14, Acceptable Use of Information Systems and Technology Resources.
2. Somerset County Public Schools shall designate space for both school/practitioner-initiated and parent/student-initiated telehealth appointments that take place on school property upon prior approval.
3. While participating in telehealth services, students will utilize a school issued device and not their personally owned electronic device. The school-issued device will be set up in a designated room that has a specific login for that machine.
4. Somerset County Public School staff who monitor telehealth appointments should comply with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and, as appropriate, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.