

Health Information Compliance Alert

Feds Offer Telehealth Start-Up Funding for Providers

If your practice is struggling to get telehealth up and running, you may want to look into these two programs funded by the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act.

1. Federal Communication Commission (FCC): As part of the CARES Act, the FCC was allocated \$200 million for its COVID-19 Telehealth Program. The commission aims to help "eligible" healthcare providers connect with patients with funding for "telecommunications services, information services, and devices," the FCC says.

"Only nonprofit and public eligible healthcare providers that fall within the categories of healthcare providers in section 254(h)(7)(B) of the 1996 Act" can apply for the funding, according to an FAQ. The FCC lists the following eligible providers: teaching hospitals; community health centers; local health departments; community mental health centers; not-for-profit hospitals; rural health clinics; skilled nursing facilities; or a consortium of one or more of the provider types listed already.

If interested, FCC urges eligible providers to apply ASAP before funding expires or the COVID-19 pandemic ends. Find out more and apply at www.fcc.gov/covid-19-telehealth-program-frequently-asked-questions-faqs.

2. Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA): Congress appropriated \$180 million to HRSA for telehealth activities and rural health assistance under the CARES Act provisions. Among its programs, HRSA offers providers two options: the Telehealth Focused Rural Health Research Center Program and the Telehealth Network Grant Program.

Find out more about the two these two options, including grants, and eligibility at www.hrsa.gov/rural-health/coronavirus-frequently-asked-questions#telehealth.