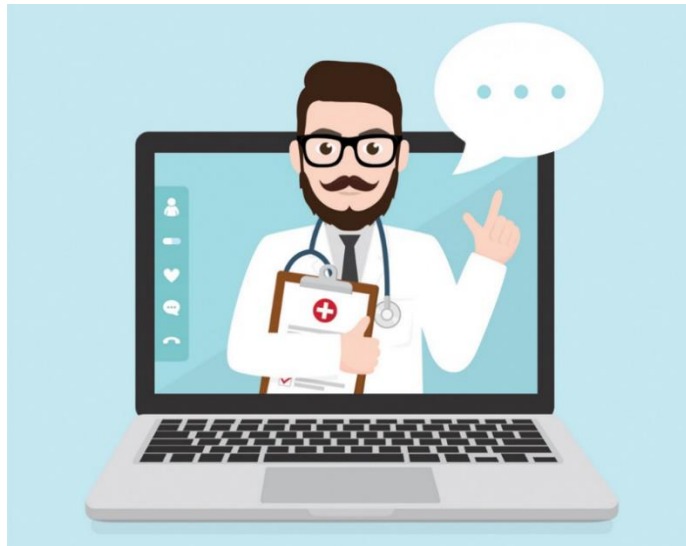


# Quick & Easy Telehealth During COVID-19



Many payers and government entities have issued temporary measures to make it easier to receive medical care through telehealth services during COVID-19 Public Health Emergency (PHE). One of the relaxed measures currently in place is that the OCR “will not impose penalties for noncompliance with requirements under the HIPAA Rules against covered health care providers in connection with the good faith provision of telehealth during the COVID-19 nationwide public health emergency”.



Implementing [telemedicine vendors that are HIPAA compliant](#) and can continue to be used after this PHE event passes and these temporary measures are removed is the ideal situation.

Unfortunately, according to a survey conducted by the TMA, many physicians have been unable to implement standard telemedicine practices/vendors due to barriers such as internet connectivity issues, cost, and the patient’s lack of technological understanding, etc. In these instances, physicians could make the most of current PHE flexibilities to utilize easier and more readily available communication methods.

Below is a sampling of some easy options physicians can present patients to conduct telemedicine visits.

Platform	HIPAA Compliant	Audio/Visual	Requirements	Cost
<a href="#">FaceTime</a>	NO	Both	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Internet</li> <li>Both patient &amp; physician require access to an iPhone or iPad</li> </ul>	Free with iPhone/iPad
<a href="#">Skype</a>	NO	Both	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Internet</li> <li>Skype application downloaded on smart device or computer</li> </ul>	Free to create account
<a href="#">WhatsApp</a>	NO	Both	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Internet</li> <li>Smartphone – download WhatsApp application</li> </ul>	Free – connects to user’s phone number to create account
<a href="#">Zoom</a> (free version)	NO	Both	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Internet</li> <li>Computer (with camera to allow for visual) or Zoom application downloaded on a smart device.</li> </ul>	Free – there are paid versions but creating a free account allows for calls up to 40 min.



# Quick & Easy Telehealth During COVID-19



**HCMS**  
Harris County Medical Society

<a href="#">Google Duo</a>	NO	Both	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internet</li> <li>• Duo application downloaded on smart device or computer</li> </ul>	Free
<a href="#">Telephone Call</a>	YES <a href="#">following certain rules</a>	Audio Only	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Phone line</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not all plans will pay for telephone only visits or at the same rate as audio/visual telemedicine visits (Medicare is paying the E/M rate, but billing differs for these visits).</li> </ul>

\*[Please note current telemedicine policies may differ between payers and plans. Please be sure to check benefits and billing policies to ensure payment.](#)

For additional information please visit the [HCMS Telemedicine](#) and [TMA Telemedicine in Texas webpages](#).

