US TELEHEALTH POLICY LANDSCAPE

NIHCM
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Center for Connected Health Policy

THE NATIONAL TELEHEALTH POLICY RESOURCE CENTER

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CENTER FOR CONNECTED HEALTH POLICY (CCHP)

is a non-profit, non-partisan organization that seeks to advance state and national telehealth policy to promote improvements in health systems and greater health equity.

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- Always consult with legal counsel.
- CCHP has no relevant financial interest, arrangement, or affiliation with any organizations related to commercial products or services discussed in this program.

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ABOUT CCHP

- Established in 2009 as a program under the Public Health Institute
- Became federally designated national telehealth policy resource center in 2012 through a grant from HRSA
- Work with a variety of funders and partners on the state and federal levels
- Administrator National Consortium of Telehealth Resource Centers
- Convener for California Telehealth Policy Coalition

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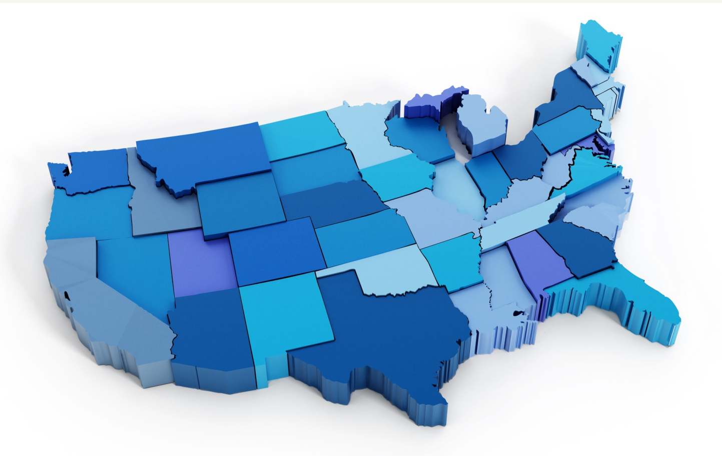
LEVELS OF TELEHEALTH POLICY: FEDERAL & STATE

FEDERAL

- Most significant policies have been temporarily extended to the end of 2024
- Outstanding questions include coverage/reimbursement in Medicare & prescribing of controlled substances via telehealth
- While generating bipartisan support, policymakers have not reach a final decision on the path forward. Sticking points include concerns over utilization, parity and fraud



STATES

- Most states have already decided permanent post-COVID-19 policies
- Seen expansions in Medicaid, definition of telehealth, progress in addressing licensure issues, addition of audio-only in telehealth policies
- States still continue to struggle with the licensure issue, but also have begun to create specific carve-outs, particularly around licensure and prescribing

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POLICYMAKERS' CONCERNS

Specific policy issues come under these concerns (for example, connectivity/broadband under access, audio-only under efficacy/over-utilization/parity, but common threads among these issues:

- Cost/Money
- Importance of Data
- Impacts on patients/disparities

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POLICYMAKERS' CONCERNS

Medicare Telehealth Trends Report

Medicare FFS Part B Claims Data: January 1, 2020 to September 30, 2023, Received by February 15, 2024

Annual Summary of Part B Medicare Fee-for-Service Telehealth Utilization

Year	Telehealth Eligible Users	Telehealth Users	Percentage of Medicare Users with a Telehealth Service
2020	30,946,785	14,826,919	48%
2021	29,967,346	10,249,756	34%
2022	28,885,208	8,503,157	29%

Disclaimer: All data presented in this report are preliminary and will continue to change as CMS processes additional claims for the reporting period.

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Notes Comments 97%

Medicare Telehealth Trends Report (Mar. 2024)

Less than 1% of the total Medicare telehealth claims raised flags for potential fraud in an OIG 2022 study.

Medicare Telehealth Services During the First Year of the Pandemic: Program Integrity Risks

Increase use of telehealth for OUD lowers likelihood of fatal drug overdose in Medicare beneficiaries.

JAMA, "Association of Receipt of Opioid Use Disorder-Related Telehealth Services and Medications for Opioid Use Disorder With Fatal Drug Overdoes Among Medicare Beneficiaries Before and During the COVID-19 Pandemic (Mar. 2023).

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POLICYMAKERS' CONCERNS

Against Parity

- Overhead costs are not the same for telehealth providers as in-person
- The service provided is different than what it is in-person so it should be paid less
- Parity may encourage providers to pivot only to telehealth, decreasing availability of in-person services

For Parity

- Overhead costs can remain the same for providers if they have both an in-person/telehealth practice
- Costs differ for providers for example, a rural provider may not have the resources to utilize telehealth the same way an urban provider might
- Lack of parity may discourage adoption of telehealth which could lead to reduction in access to care

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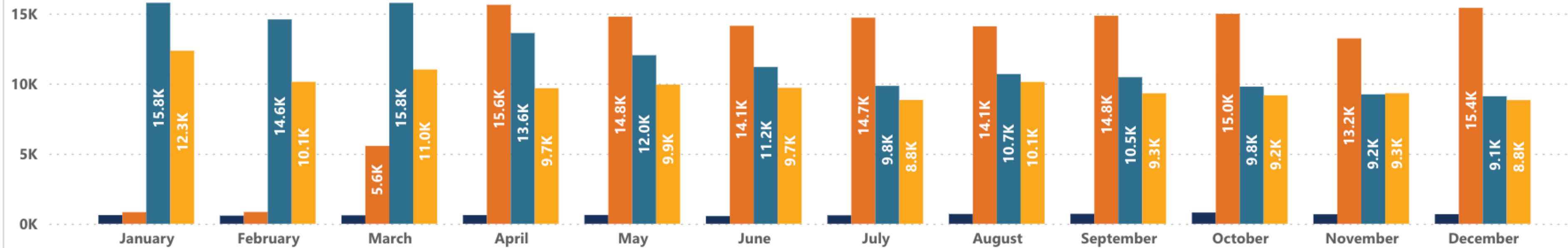
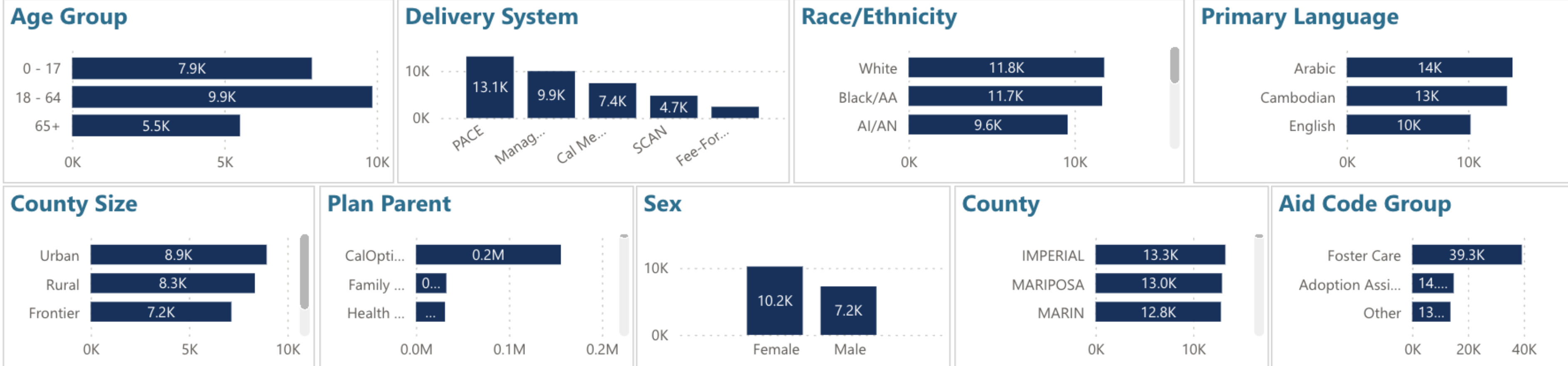
DATA

All telehealth visits per 100,000 member months

Reporting Year: All
Reporting Month: All

Year ● 2019 ● 2020 ● 2021 ● 2022





Programs focusing more on collecting data, but gaps remain.

https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/provgovpart/Pages/telehealth-dashboard.aspx

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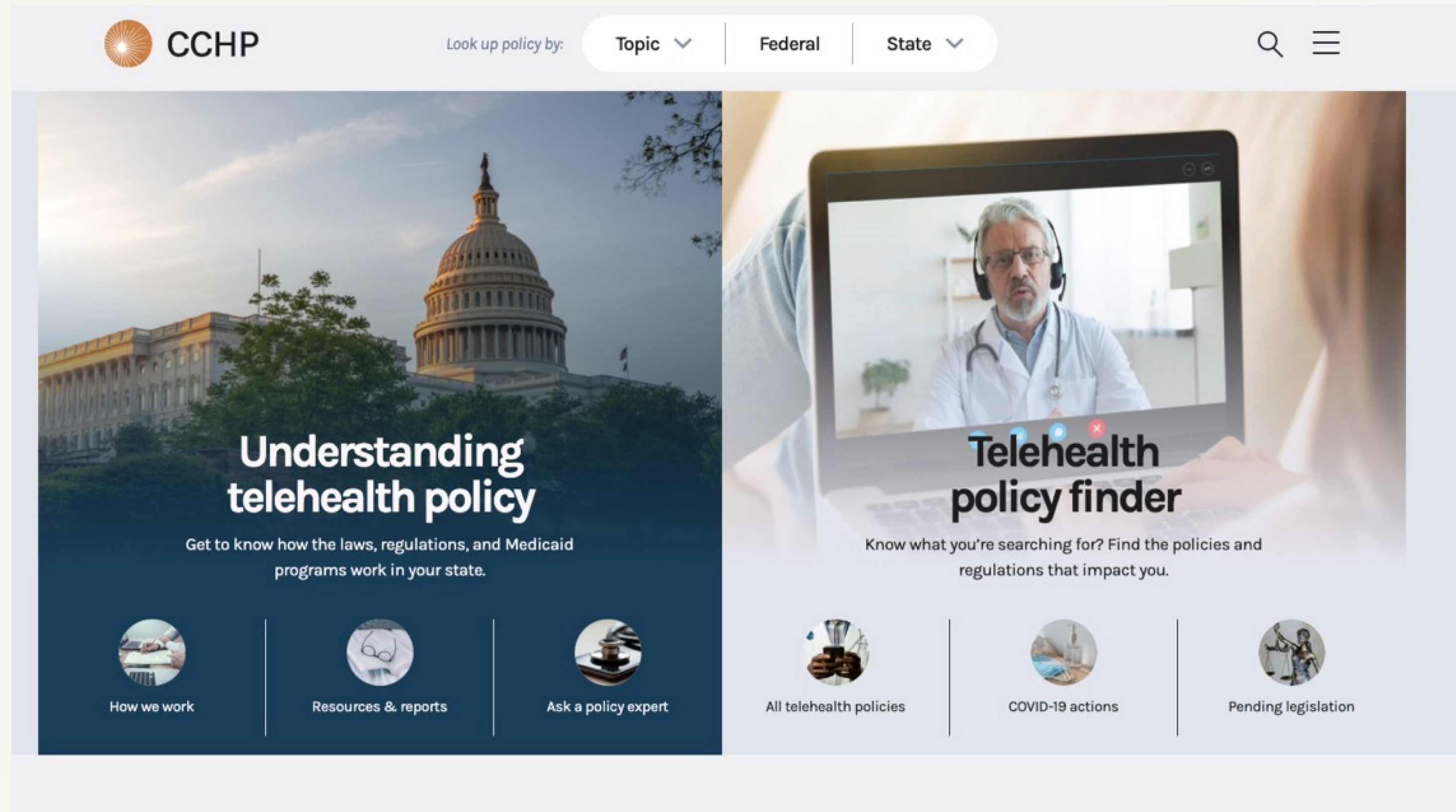
CCHP

- CCHP Website – cchpca.org



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