

## OVERVIEW

- Telehealth (also referred to as telemedicine or virtual health) is the practice of meeting with a doctor, nurse, doula or community health worker over the phone or through a video conference, making it a critical modern tool for expanding access to health care.
- **The majority of women in rural America** live more than a 30-minute drive from a hospital or obstetric services facility, and more than 10% of those women drive over 100 miles for prenatal and/or postpartum care.
- Virtual health services can help close these geographic gaps so new, expecting and future mothers can access high quality care from the comfort of their homes or through a health clinic to see a specialty doctor.

## IMPROVING ACCESS AND OUTCOMES

### HOW DOES TELEHEALTH WORK?

Telehealth allows patients to visit their health care provider or specialty doctor using a computer, tablet or smartphone. This can be done at home or within a health clinic.

Telehealth allows patients to:

- Speak with health care providers to receive help or medical advice from the comfort of their homes.
- Securely message a health care provider with health-related questions or information.
- Receive secure information such as test results, prescription information, etc.



### HOW TELEHEALTH CAN SUPPORT MATERNAL HEALTH

The advancement of telehealth helps bridge gaps in access to care and improves outcomes for pregnant women and their babies through:

- **Prenatal and Reproductive Care:** Telehealth enables **remote consultations with obstetricians, gynecologists** and other maternal caregivers where providers can offer contraceptive advice and prescriptions, access to regular check-ins, monitoring of fetal development and education on prenatal health.
- **Postpartum Support:** Telehealth offers **postpartum care through virtual visits**, addressing concerns such as breastfeeding, physical recovery and mental health.
- **High-Risk Pregnancy Management:** Telehealth allows for closer monitoring of high-risk pregnancies, with regular check-ins and **remote monitoring of vital signs and fetal health**.

## CHECK BEFORE CONNECTING

### Preparing for a maternal health telehealth appointment.

- Is the device you plan to use for your telehealth visit charged or plugged in?
- Are you connected to the internet through WiFi or a cable connection?
- Is your device's camera uncovered?
- Do your privacy settings allow the telehealth program or app to use your camera?
- Is your microphone on?
- Is your volume on?
- Is your device propped up so the screen stays steady and your hands are free?



To learn more, visit [Heartland Forward](#) and the [American Library Association](#) telehealth learning module.