



# Telemedicine and You: Understanding New Healthcare Options

**Shawna Wright, PhD, LP**

Associate Director, KU Center for  
Telemedicine & Telehealth

Clinical Assistant Professor, Dept. of  
Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences

University of Kansas Medical Center

# What is telemedicine?”

---

“A subset of telehealth that refers only to the provision of ***clinical healthcare services*** remotely, through the use of telecommunications technology”

“Telemedicine” and “telehealth” are often used interchangeably

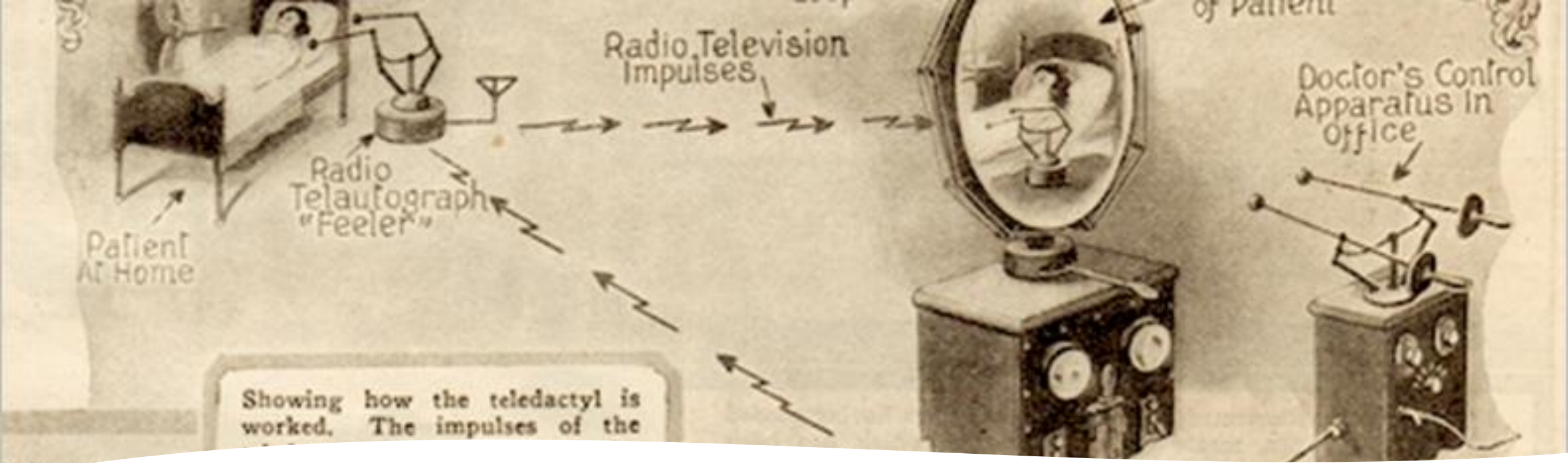




# What are the benefits of telemedicine?

---

- Improve access to high quality care from specialists and teams
- Reduce travel
- Enhance care coordination
- Address provider shortages
- Reduce provider travel time/cost to outreach sites
- Treat patients locally in their home communities and medical homes
- Reduce provider isolation
- Reduce family stress
- *Provide safe care during a global health pandemic*



Is it new?



**1879**



**1906**



**1920s**



**1925**

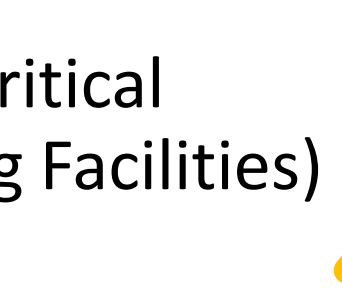


**Late 1950s:**

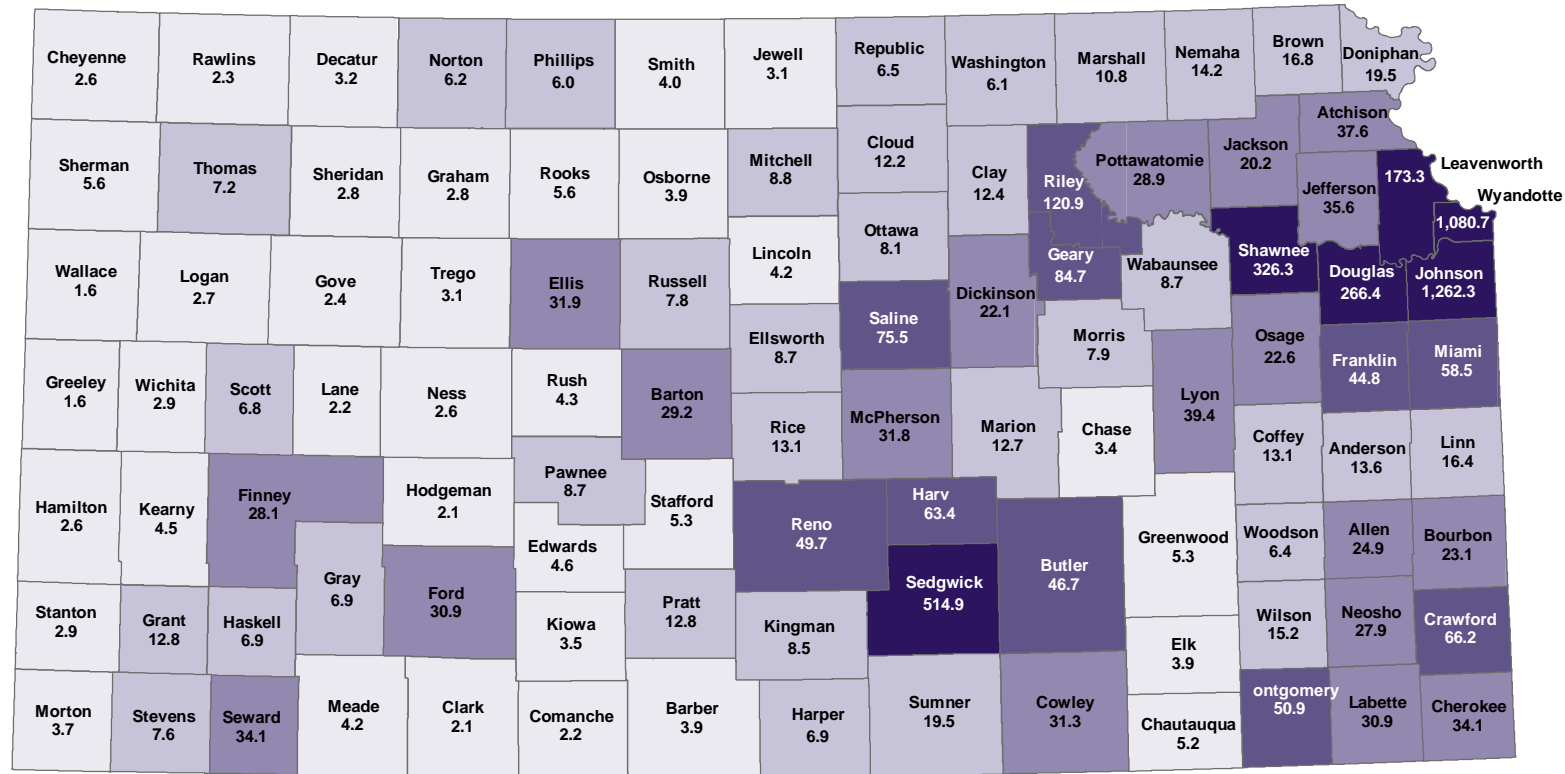


# Telemedicine rules and regulations (before the pandemic)

Before 2020, Telehealth was highly regulated, based on:

- Geography (rural vs. urban)
  - Availability of providers (health professional shortage areas)
  - Provider type (Physicians, Nurse practitioners, Physician assistants, Clinical psychologists)
  - Patient site (Physician offices, Critical Access Hospitals, Skilled Nursing Facilities)
  - Type of service
- 

# Population Density Classifications in Kansas, by County, 2018



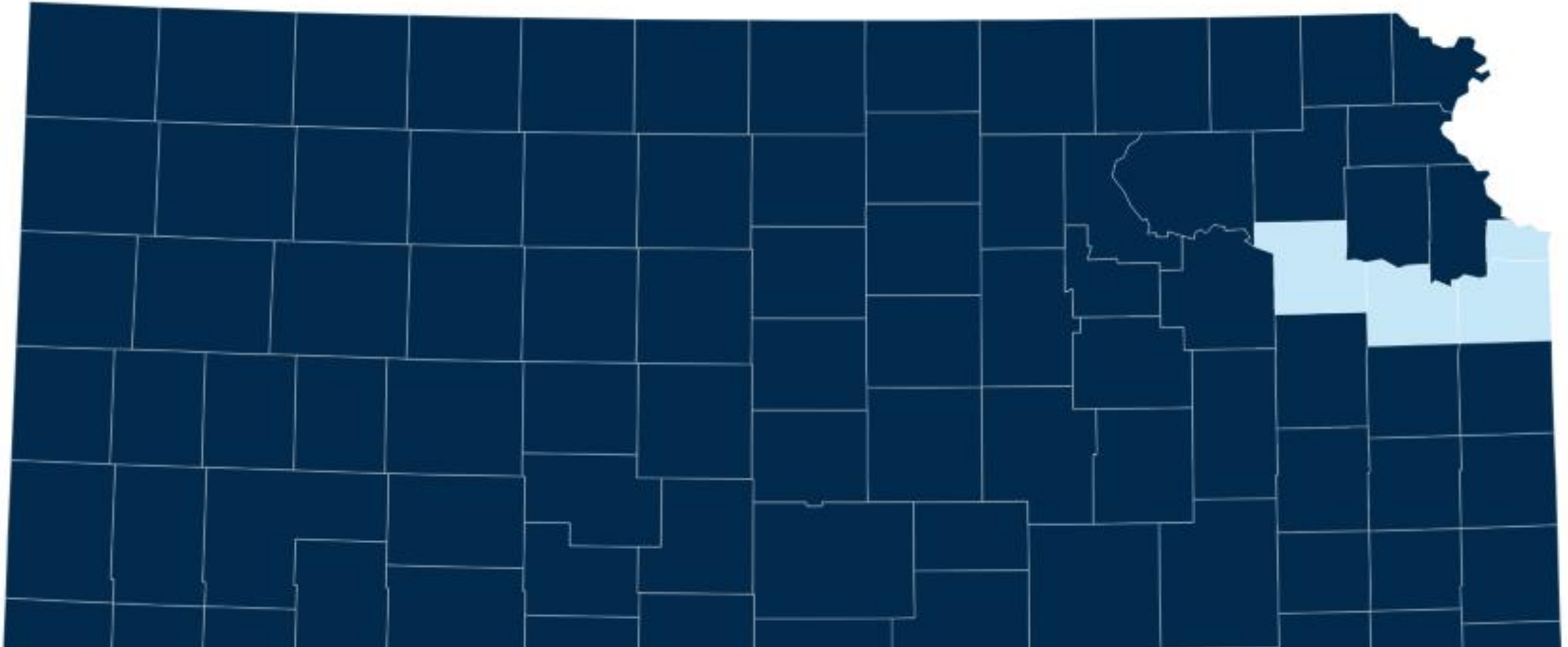
Source: Institute for Policy & Social Research, The University of Kansas; data from the U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates, Vintage 2018.

## Population Density by Classification\* (persons per square mile)

State: 35.6

- Frontier (less than 6.0 ppsm)
- Rural (6.0 - 19.9 ppsm)
- Densely-settled Rural (20.0 - 39.9 ppsm)
- Semi-Urban (40.0 - 149.9 ppsm)
- Urban (150.0 ppsm or more)

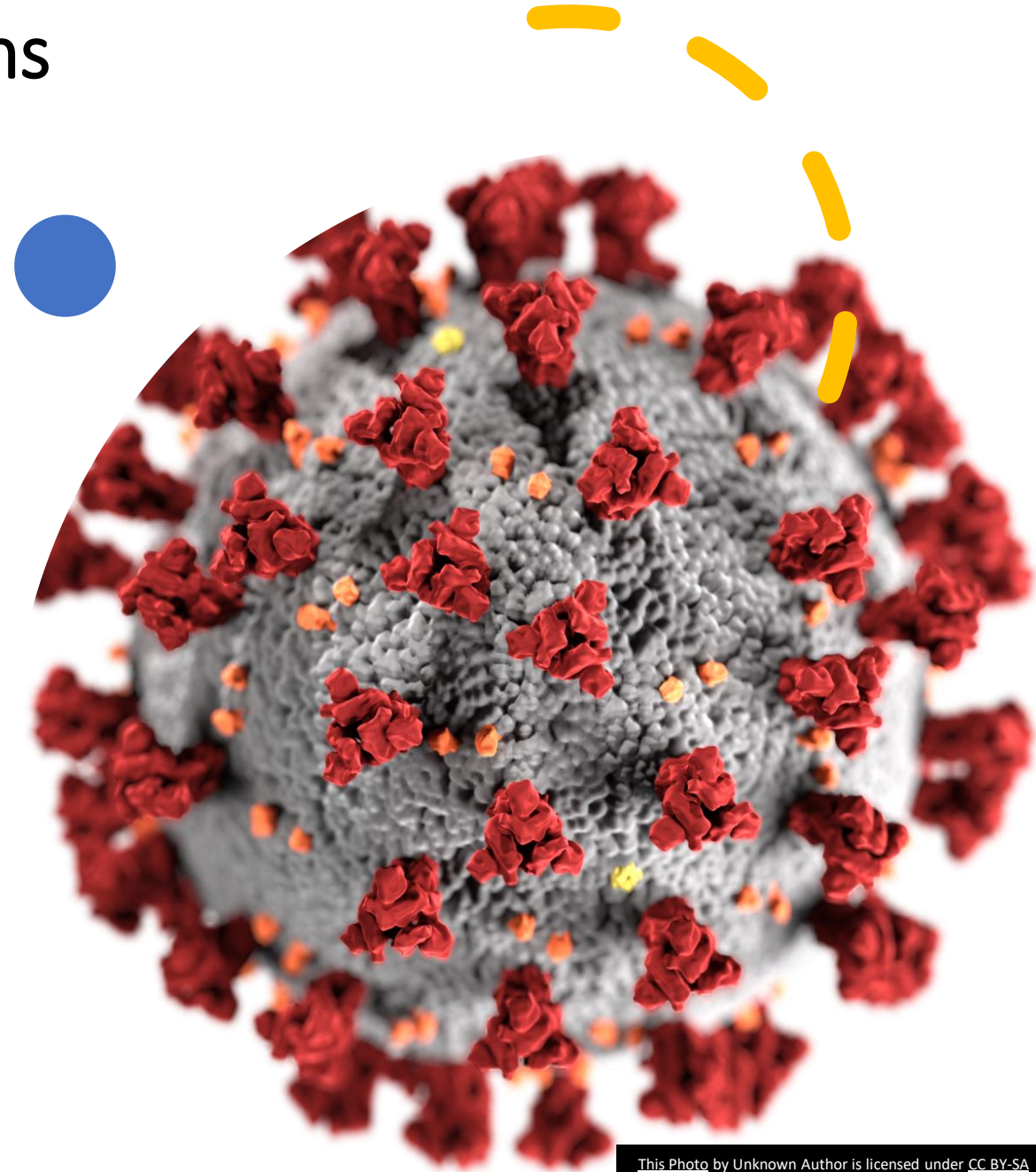
\* Kansas Department of Health and Environment classifications.



# **Kansas Mental Health Professional Shortage Areas 2020**

# Telemedicine rules and regulations (during the pandemic)

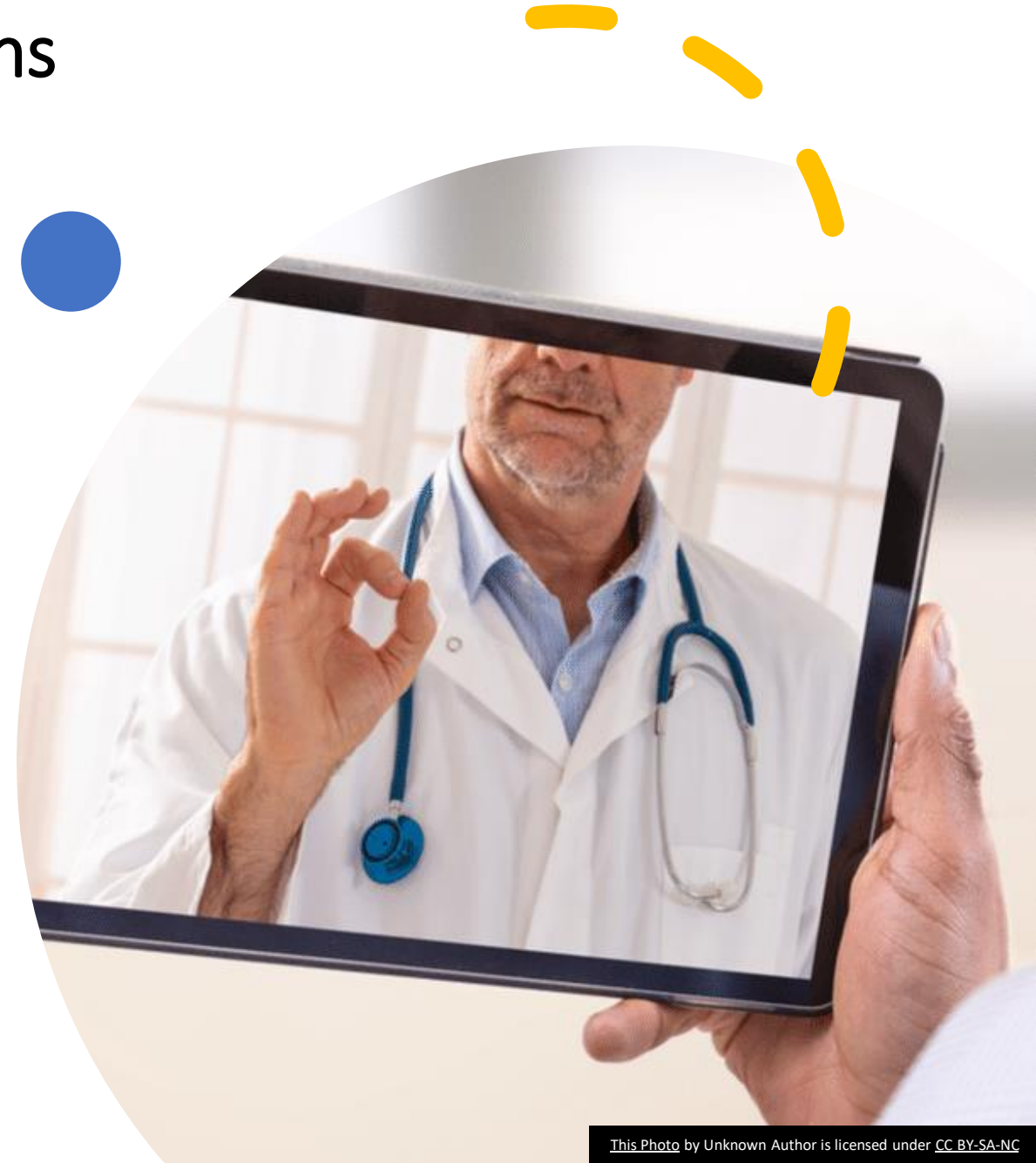
- No geographic restrictions  
(available to urban and rural)
- Not based on health professional  
shortage areas
- Allowed more provider types
- ***Increased patient site to include  
the home***
- Opened more health care billing  
codes to telehealth





# Telemedicine rules and regulations (in the future pandemic)

- We'll have to wait and see
- Lots of new federal and state legislation
- Insurance providers will have a say
- Consumers should speak up now



# What services are available?

- Live (synchronous) televideo appointments
  - Phone-only\*
- Virtual check-ins (synchronous and asynchronous)
- eVisits (asynchronous)
- Remote patient monitoring
- Mobile health (mHealth)



This Photo by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY](#)

# What type of care should I expect?

Telemedicine is a *mode* of delivering health care.

You should expect the same level of care and care coordination through telemedicine as you receive during in-person visits.

If your provider cannot deliver the same level of care through telemedicine, you should be asked to be seen in-person.



# How do I prepare for a telemedicine appointment?

- Make sure you have access to a phone or device with internet.
- Find a quiet, private place where you are comfortable.
- Take a video or photo of anything you'd like to show the provider. Send the images ahead of your appointment. This can be especially helpful for an audio-only appointment.
- Have information ready about your allergies, medications, hospitalizations, surgeries, and test results.
- Write down any questions.
- Prepare to take notes.
- Wear loose clothing if you'll need to show the provider something on your skin or a specific part of your body.
- Be ready to show the devices or tools that help you monitor your chronic conditions, if you use any. For example, have your blood pressure monitor nearby.





## Will my insurance cover telemedicine?

- Check with your provider
- Plans will vary
- Telehealth coverage may change from year to year

# What technology or equipment do I need?

- Computer/laptop with a camera and microphone
- Handheld device (tablet or smart phone)
- Devices recommended by your provider



# How do I advocate for telemedicine in my community?

---

- Talk to your medical and behavioral health providers
- Talk to your insurance provider
- Contact your city, state, and federal legislators





# Questions?

Shawna Wright, PhD, LP

[swright6@kumc.edu](mailto:swright6@kumc.edu)