

Hard of Hearing

Telehealth

# **Communication Strategies for Telehealth Visits**

#### FIND THE BEST ENVIRONMENT FOR THE CALL

- Healthcare provider(s) need to be able to hear and see you well
- Ensure you have good lighting
- Eliminate or reduce background noise
- Pick a location with good sound quality (for example, minimal echo)
- Ensure you can see the video clearly. Consider using a large screen if possible
- Let household members know you have a telehealth appointment, and you need a quiet space with no interruptions

### SET COMMUNICATION RULES IN ADVANCE

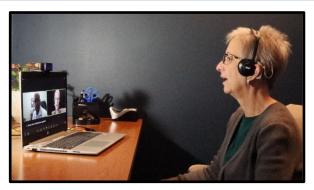
- Tell healthcare providers about your hearing loss and how you communicate
- Ask people to put their cameras at eye level
- Ask providers to face the camera and ensure their face is clearly visible while talking (for example, not placing objects, like papers, in front of their faces)
- Ask providers to talk directly into the microphone using a clear, natural and regular rate of speech. Headsets can help
- Consider arranging a hand signal, chat message, or platform feature (for example, a raised hand feature) to let the person know you need to interrupt due to a communication need
- Inform the provider that you will need to see their face for communication so they can make plans to attend the appointment without the use of a mask
- Inform the provider if you need additional time to respond due to processing the information spoken (for example, when lip reading)
- If using communication accommodations such as Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) or American Sign Language interpretation, inform the provider that there will be some delay to your responses



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### **OTHER TIPS**

- Plan what to do if the telehealth appointment is disconnected
  Request a direct phone line or text number
- Review what you need to know in advance such as unfamiliar terminology or how to use the platform
- You may be able to submit some information using a patient portal prior to the appointment to ease communication during the appointment
- Make a list of questions ahead of time to help you remember what to ask
- Have any materials you will need to refer to readily available such as your insurance card or medication list
- If you are having trouble understanding something, ask the provider to rephrase rather than repeat the same statement
- Ask the provider to use the chat feature to clarify critical information such as how often to take medication and the correct dosage
- Be certain to verify your understanding when needed. Repeating back what you thought you heard and asking if you are correct, is a good way to do this
- Be patient, your provider may be new to learning to communicate with a patient that has hearing loss



Hard of Hearing patient wearing headset and using CART captioning while talking with a physician.

To learn more about your rights during telehealth appointments, and how to advocate for your communication access, please contact the <u>NC DSDHH Regional Center</u> near you.



This document was developed through a collaborative process involving the National Consortium of Telehealth Resource Centers.



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