

RE: S.50

Hello Representative Lippert and Loring,

Below please find the answers to the Committee's questions regarding dentistry and telehealth. Also, please let me know what else the Committee might need and how they might proceed on the suggested change.

Thank you!

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Outside of the setting of a dental hygienist or dentist in a dental office needing to contact a specialist, what are other examples of how this would be used?  
Care could be provided in other settings, such as a nursing home, health department office, school, preschool, or FQHC.

Has this been done in other states? If so, has it been assessed?

Yes. This has been done in other states. Here is a report from the Oral Health Workforce Research Center at the School of Public Health at the University of Albany. The report details six case studies from CO, NY, GA, OR and MN. While the document does note that more evaluation would be helpful, it also shows how telemedicine can play a key role in dental health. California has included dentists in telemedicine under their Medicaid program (Medi-Cal). Here is a 2015 news article about the program (although it does focus on the Medi-Cal reimbursement rates, which is not the focus of this discussion).

One way to use telehealth for dental care in Vermont that has been discussed by stakeholders would be to use the "store and forward" technique. In this example, a hygienist providing preventive oral health care in a nursing home could provide pictures to a supervising dentists to help triage treatment needs (i.e., assess which residents need to be prioritized for treatment).

Here is a summary of the key findings from the Oral Health Research Workforce Research Center report:

Case study participants identified the benefits of teledentistry, noting that the modality provided opportunities to assess the oral health status of patients, to accomplish risk assessment and determine treatment needs, to educate patients about treatment options, and to effect appropriate referrals. The findings from the case studies are summarized below:

- Teledentistry is a relevant and appropriate strategy for linking patients with clinical providers who are not otherwise easily accessed.

- Teledentistry is a cost-effective modality for both patients and providers.
- Teledentistry services are useful for delivering both primary and specialty dental consultations.
- Teledentistry offers the opportunity to provide patient-centered services coordinated by an inclusive team of clinical providers and other organizational staff.
- The effectiveness of teledentistry services is predicated on preliminary planning processes and focused training for providers prior to implementation of a teledentistry program.
- Infrastructure requirements vary by location, but certain basic technology is essential to provide high-quality services.
- More evaluation would be useful.

[http://www.chwsny.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/OHWRC\\_Case\\_Studies\\_of\\_6\\_Teledentistry\\_Programs\\_2016.pdf](http://www.chwsny.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/OHWRC_Case_Studies_of_6_Teledentistry_Programs_2016.pdf)