TELEHEALTH
IN PHYSICAL THERAPY

Jesse Song
MSPH Student
Board of Physical Therapy Examiner

• Regulating physical therapy since 1947

• Mission: Protecting the citizens of Maryland
  1) Facilitating **licensure** of both Physical Therapists and Physical Therapist Assistants
  2) Receive and resolve **complaints**
  3) Setting **standards** for the practice of physical therapy that reflect current and upcoming developments
Project Overview

1) Comprehensive review of current best telehealth practices and regulations in the 50 states

2) Contact state boards, professional association, academia, and private parties

3) Create a literature review of evidence supporting telehealth practices
What is Telehealth?

“Use of **electronic communications** to provide and deliver a host of **health-related information** and **health care services**, including, but not limited to physical therapy-related information and services, over **large and small distances**.

Telehealth encompasses a variety of health care and health promotion activities, including, but not limited to, education, advice, reminders, interventions, and monitoring of interventions”

– American Physical Therapy Association
Physical Therapy in Telehealth?

Image Courtesy of Clay Brown, PT, DPT
Methods

1) **Consulted literature** on telehealth from professional associations and telehealth special interest groups

2) Searched for regulations through **Lexis Nexus State Capitol** for telehealth regulations

3) **Contacted and interviewed** boards and practitioners in states with relevant regulations
Alaska’s Example

- Alaska is very large and travelling can be difficult
- Travel can only happen by flight, often costing $700
- “Moving information rather than moving people”
Regulatory Language Recommendations

• Broad definition of Telehealth
• Secure Data Encryption and HIPAA Compliance
• Initial Consultation as In-person Requirement
• Inter-state Jurisdiction Issues
• Clinical Records Documentation
Limitations and Challenges

- **Lack of states** with telehealth regulations in physical therapy
- Concerns are of **speculative nature**
- **Limited evidence** in physical therapy and telehealth of current practices
- Telehealth is still a growing and **changing** field
Lessons Learned

• A better understanding of the regulatory process
• The importance of networking
• People are happy to help
• There may not be a concrete answer
Implications

- Maryland is pushing for the growth of telehealth\(^7\)
  - Statute requiring reimbursement from private insurance passed October 2012

- A need to develop regulations soon
  - Based on limited examples
  - Predict growth of the field

- Telehealth can be an important tool for increasing access to healthcare and improving health outcome
References


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Questions?

Jesse Song
MSPH 2014
Health Policy & Management
jsong@jhsph.edu

Board of Physical Therapy Examiners
4201 Patterson Avenue
Baltimore, MD 21215
Telephone: (410) 764-4718