

SUBJECT: Supporting Accessibility on Telemedicine Platforms For Individuals with Vision **and/or Hearing** Impairment and Disabilities

SUBMITTED BY: Student Association of the ACOFP on behalf of
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REFERRED TO: 2023 American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians (ACOFP)
Congress of Delegates

RESOLUTION NO. 13

1 WHEREAS, telemedicine involves the use of telecommunication technologies to support the
2 delivery of medical, diagnostic, and treatment-related services by physicians and other
3 medical practitioners¹; and

4 WHEREAS, telemedicine provides a convenient, low-cost means for health care providers to
5 connect with patients²; and

6 WHEREAS, adoption and use of telemedicine increased by an estimated 154% with the COVID-19
7 pandemic in March 2020³; and

8 WHEREAS, the 2021 National Health Interview Survey (NHIS) found that 37.0% of adults reported
9 using telemedicine in the past 12 months⁴; and

10 WHEREAS, vision disability is one of the top 10 disabilities in the country with 8 million adults in
11 2018 reporting vision disabilities and 32.2 million adults reporting visual deficiencies
12 where they needed aid for independent access to their health records⁵; and

13 WHEREAS, patients with vision impairment encounter a variety of obstacles in accessing adequate
14 healthcare which contribute to poorer health outcomes and diminished quality of life⁶; and

15 WHEREAS, a study from the American Foundation for the Blind found that many telemedicine and
16 online telehealth services were not user friendly to third party screen reading software
17 with 57% of participants reporting having accessibility challenges with telehealth
18 platforms⁷; and

19 WHEREAS, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) prohibits discrimination against individuals
20 with disabilities in all areas of public life, including hospitals, clinics, and medical offices;
21 now⁸, therefore be it

22 RESOLVED, that the American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians (ACOFP) encourages
23 health systems, hospitals, and other medical facilities to support telemedicine technology
24 interface and design initiatives aimed at improving accessibility for people with vision
25 **and/or hearing** impairment and ~~vision~~ disabilities; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that the ACOFP recognizes accessibility issues of navigating and utilizing telemedicine as a current barrier for people with vision **and/or hearing** impairment **and disabilities** in the ACOFP Telemedicine Position Statement.

ACTION: REFERRED BACK TO AUTHOR as of March 29, 2023

Explanatory Statement: It can be cost prohibitive to physician practice.

References:

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