

# EFFECTIVE USE OF 911 FOR EMERGENCIES DURING TELEHEALTH SESSIONS

## Tips for Behavioral Healthcare Providers

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In the event that a patient presents with a life-safety risk of harm to self or others—or has a medical or other type of emergency—the behavioral healthcare provider may need to call 911 to get immediate assistance for the patient. These steps should be taken after telehealth emergency protocols have been put into place<sup>1</sup>.

Follow these tips to effectively use 911 emergency services during a telehealth appointment:



**Verify the patient's physical address and call-back number** at the beginning of the telehealth session:

- Confirm the full address, including state and locality.
- Note: If unable to ascertain the patient's physical location and/or phone number, it will be difficult for the 911 call center to route the call to the appropriate 911 call center and find the patient.



**Provide the patient's location and phone number to the 911 call-taker** (if 911 needs to be called for the patient):

- Note: The auto-connected 911 call center is based on the caller's (provider's) location, not the patient's location.
- Inform the 911 call-taker that the call pertains to the patient's location.
- Provide the patient's address and telephone number to the 911 call-taker so that the call can be routed to the appropriate 911 call center and response is dispatched to an accurate location.
- Note: The 911 call-taker may also call the patient directly. The patient may be asked to stay on the line.



**Stay on the line** with the patient:

- Stay on the line with the patient to ensure transfer of care to emergency services personnel.

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<sup>1</sup>American Telemedicine Association, Practice Guidelines for Video-Based Online Mental Health Services (2013). [https://www.integration.samhsa.gov/operations-administration/practice-guidelines-for-video-based-online-mental-health-services\\_ATA\\_5\\_29\\_13.pdf](https://www.integration.samhsa.gov/operations-administration/practice-guidelines-for-video-based-online-mental-health-services_ATA_5_29_13.pdf) \*

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