

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Vancouver & Longview, WA: New service available to help Medicare recipients access telehealth appointments with their doctor.

The Area Agency on Aging & Disabilities of Southwest Washington has launched a new service called the Telemedicine Access Hub in Clark and Cowlitz counties. The Telemedicine Access Hubs are located inside AAADSW's business offices in Vancouver and Longview. Telemedicine Access Hubs will help Medicare recipients connect to video appointments with their healthcare providers without having to go to the clinic. Patients can schedule an appointment at the Telemedicine Access Hub to connect with a webcam-enabled computer, supportive staff who will help them learn to join a video appointment, and a private meeting space for their appointment. Patients using the Telemedicine Access Hub will have much less interaction with others than they would if they were going in to a medical clinic, which will help reduce potential exposure to COVID-19.

"We wanted to help support people in reducing their exposure to the virus by helping them connect to their healthcare provider on a virtual platform. The Telemedicine Access Hub is a great resource for older adults who would like to participate in video visits but don't have a way to do that on their own," says Breanne Swanson, AAADSW's Primary Care Liaison who helped develop the Telemedicine Access Hub.

Despite the dramatic increase in telemedicine utilization in the last year, it is still underutilized. Many people face barriers to accessing video appointments and may not know that video appointments could meet their needs; this is especially true for older adults. Older adults are less likely to have high-speed internet or a webcam enabled device. If they do have these things, they may not know how to join a video appointment because they have never done it previously. AAADSW's Telemedicine Access Hub can address these barriers. The Telemedicine Access Hub's staff will focus on supporting the patient and building their confidence in using technology so that one day the patient would be able to join a video visit on their own.

The Telemedicine Access Hub is a free service open to all Medicare recipients. To learn more or schedule an appointment please contact AAADSW's Aging & Disability Resource Center.

Clark County Telemedicine Access Hub: 360-694-8144 or iaclark@dshs.wa.gov

Cowlitz County Telemedicine Access Hub: 360-501-8399 or iakelso@dshs.wa.gov

The Area Agency on Aging & Disabilities of Southwest Washington is a multi-service public agency providing assistance to the older adults, adults with disabilities, and family caregivers of Clark, Cowlitz, Klickitat, Skamania and Wahkiakum counties. The Telemedicine Access Hub is made possible thanks to AAADSW's partnership with the Northwest Geriatrics Workforce Enhancement Center who connected the agency to CARES Act Supplemental Funding provided by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Health Resources and Services Administration.

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