Telehealth — the use of electronic information and telecommunications technologies to support and promote long-distance clinical health care, patient and professional health-related education, public health, and health administration.

Rural communities will benefit from the use of telehealth to support primary care, specialty care and behavioral health. However, harnessing telehealth’s opportunity requires investing in hardware and software, on-site capability at the sending and receiving end, and broadband access.

In 2018, lawmakers adopted a bill allowing Medicaid-enrolled providers to deliver services through telemedicine any time they can provide the same level of service as an in-person encounter and when the service is within the scope of services offered by the provider, without any geographic restrictions.

Although Missouri has been a national leader in expanding telehealth services, questions remain whether payment rates are sufficient to sustain them. Moreover, Missouri should investigate whether interstate medical licensure compacts would allow physician services to be offered more broadly.

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