

MAY 2022

# Telehealth Definitions

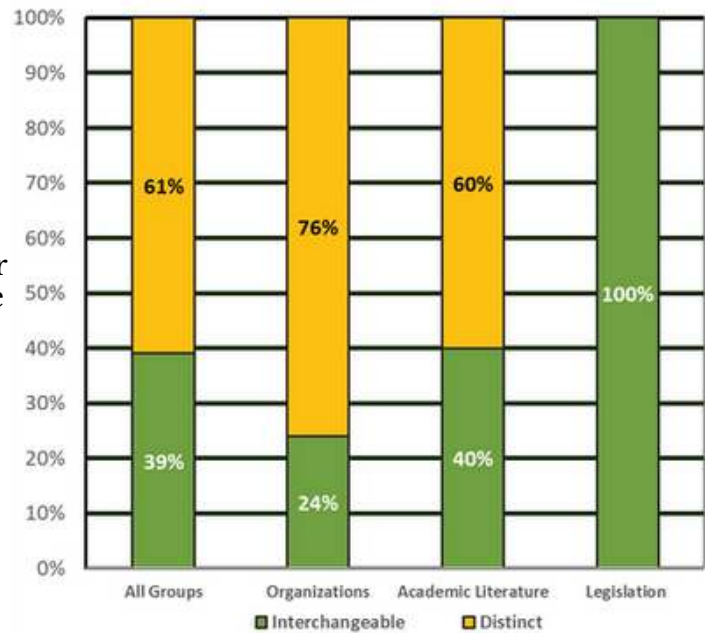
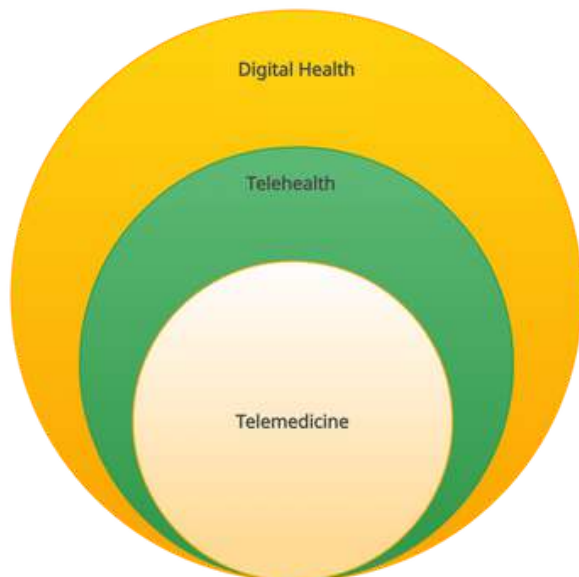
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EVALUATION CENTER



The purpose of this  
handout is to help  
navigate the use of the  
various terms and  
definitions by  
presenting current use  
of terms, definitions,  
and recommendations  
for choosing definitions.

## TELEHEALTH, TELEMEDICINE, OR DIGITAL HEALTH?

Entities use "telehealth" and "telemedicine" either interchangeably or recognize them as two distinct terms. "*Telemedicine*" is considered the more granular term referring to clinical patient care. Generally, the larger umbrella term of telehealth encompasses health education, administration, and public health. The term "*digital health*" is most commonly used as an overarching term that includes both "*telehealth*" and "*telemedicine*" as subterms.



## INTERCHANGABILITY OF "TELEHEALTH" AND "TELEMEDICINE"

Legislators and policymakers are more likely to use the terms interchangeably rather than defining a distinction between the terms which could lead to confusion when putting laws and policies in practice.

# ORGANIZATIONAL USE OF TELEHEALTH TERMS



Organization	Telehealth	Telemedicine	Virtual Care	Digital Health
Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRO)	✓	✓		✓
American Medical Association (AMA)	✓	✓		✓
American Telemedicine Association (ATA)	✓		✓	
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)	Cites HRSA	✓		
Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS)	✓	✓		
Federal Communications Commission (FCC)	✓	✓		
Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)	✓	✓	✓	
Indian Health Service (IHS)	Cites HRSA			
National Institutes for Health (NIH)	✓			
National Institutes of Standards and Technology (NIST)		✓		
The Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC)	Cites HRSA			
U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)	✓			
U.S. Department of Labor	Cites HRSA	✓		
U.S. Department of Veteran's Affairs (VA)	✓			
World Health Organization (WHO)				✓

## PUTTING DEFINITIONS INTO PRACTICE

When reviewing definitions provided by organizations there are certain factors to consider when deciding which definition to use in your daily practice.

## FACTORS FOR CONSIDERATION WHEN CHOOSING A DEFINITION

### Audience

It is important to consider for whom you are defining the concept of telehealth. Is it for the education of providers, legislation and reimbursement, or information for consumers?

### Purpose

Why are you defining the concept of telehealth? Is it to set parameters for what is allowable by legislation or is it to educate on the concept in general?

The full report of this research can be found at <https://idhi.uams.edu/rtec/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2022/05/Telehealth-Definitions-Paper-06MAY2022-1.pdf>

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