In September 2016, the Washington State Department of Health’s Children with Special Health Care Needs Program was awarded the Autism Spectrum Disorder and Developmental Disabilities (AS3D) federal grant. The goal of the grant work is to ensure early diagnosis and entry into services for children with autism spectrum disorder and other developmental disabilities, with a focus on medically underserved and rural populations. One mechanism for increasing diagnosis and access is telehealth. Telehealth encompasses a broad variety of technologies and tactics to deliver virtual medical, health, and education services; telehealth is not a specific service, but a collection of means to enhance care and education delivery. Program staff are working to maximize existing telehealth laws and other infrastructure to increase access to services and to facilitate communication and capacity building among providers. In order to better understand the current landscape for telehealth among families of children and youth with special health care needs, a survey was conducted in summer 2017 to determine caregiver access to technology, interest in telehealth, and barriers that limit telehealth utilization.

Who Took the Survey
There were 118 caregiver respondents included in the final analysis of the survey results. Out of the 118, 106 took the survey in English and 12 in Spanish, 43.5 percent reported having a college degree or higher, 94.4 percent of the respondents were mothers, 71 percent identified as White, 42 percent had Medicaid insurance, the median age of the child receiving services was 8 years old, and 39 percent of respondents had a current prescription for applied behavioral analysis (ABA) services. While the geographic range was wide, this survey should not be considered representative of Washington parents of children and youth with special health care needs as a whole.

DEFINITIONS

mHealth
A form of telemedicine using wireless devices and cell phone technologies.

Telementoring
The practice of developing mentorship relationships between learners and those with more experience in a particular subject or area of expertise; experts are geographically removed from learners and use web and phone-based methods to interact.

Telehealth
A variety of technologies and tactics to deliver virtual medical, health, and education services. For the purposes of this survey, the term “telehealth” will encompass the concepts of telemedicine, telehealth, mHealth, and tele-mentoring.

Acronyms
ABA  Applied Behavioral Analysis
COE  Centers of Excellence for Autism Diagnosis
NDC  Neurodevelopmental Center
CYSHCN  Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs
TA  Technical Assistance
AS3D  Autism Spectrum Disorder and Developmental Disabilities (federal grant)

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For additional information, email cshcn.support@doh.wa.gov, or call (360) 236-3507.

Top Access Barriers and Concerns
Telehealth could be a vital resource for families/caregivers that experience barriers to health care. Leading issues in accessing care included backlog and transportation problems; a majority of the people that reported these barriers lived in the NW region of the state. Additionally, 22 respondents indicated no delays or difficulties. Caregivers reported the most delays when accessing speech therapy (23), occupational therapy (16), and autism-related or ABA therapy (16).
Caregivers reported varying levels of interest in telehealth depending on the types of service provided. Consultation and pre-recorded videos were favored over diagnostic services.

### Percentage of Caregivers Interested in Telehealth for Different Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Type</th>
<th>Interest (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provider Diagnoses</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provider Consultations</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Purposes</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Recorded Videos</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Caregiver Interest in and Access to Telehealth

Of those who responded, 74 percent indicated that they would be interested in using telehealth services. 93 percent of all caregivers indicated access to a smartphone, laptop, or tablet with video-call capacity, and 60 percent felt confident or very confident about setting up such a call.

### Interest and Capacity in Telehealth Utilization

- **Caregiver would use telehealth in the next year**
  - ABA Prescription: 79%
  - No ABA Prescription: 71%

- **Caregiver confident about setting up video chat**
  - ABA Prescription: 65%
  - No ABA Prescription: 56%

- **Caregiver has access to videochat device**
  - ABA Prescription: 86%
  - No ABA Prescription: 97%

- **Child has used telehealth before**
  - ABA Prescription: 7%
  - No ABA Prescription: 4%

*If available and covered by insurance
**Confident or very confident

To access the Telehealth Capacity Assessment full report and the executive summary, please go to: [https://www.doh.wa.gov/YouandYourFamily/InfantsandChildren/HealthandSafety/ChildrenwithSpecialHealthCareNeeds/Publications](https://www.doh.wa.gov/YouandYourFamily/InfantsandChildren/HealthandSafety/ChildrenwithSpecialHealthCareNeeds/Publications)