

I. Action:	Work with insurance companies to broaden their policies to include telemedicine patient encounters as reimbursable services.
II. Sponsoring Entity:	Community Council, its Telehealth Subcommittee, and the Nebraska Association of Health Systems and Hospitals
III. Goals and Objectives:	To have insurance companies in Nebraska include telemedicine patient encounters as reimbursable services.
IV. Justification / Rationale:	<p>Currently no private insurers in Nebraska reimburse providers for patient encounters done via telecommunications. Because the same services would be reimbursed if done face to face, the current policy provides a great disincentive for providers to engage in telemedicine and for health systems to expand telemedicine programs to underserved areas of the state. It is also threatening the long-term sustainability of the telehealth systems in the state which are currently operating under grant funding. Insurance companies in several other states, including Kansas and Arizona, are reimbursing providers for telemedicine patient encounters.</p> <p>Approaching the legislature to mandate telemedicine reimbursement was considered. However, it was decided that the best course of action at this time is to work with individual insurance companies.</p>
V. Work Plan:	Members of the Community Council ,the telehealth subcommittee, and the Nebraska Association of Hospitals and Health systems will begin by approaching individual insurance companies.
VI. Required Resources:	No additional resources are required from the state at this time.
VII. Estimated Cost (if appropriate):	N/A--No additional resources are required from the state at this time.