



Edition 1: Practical Guide to Teleaudiology

SASLHA and SAAA are working together closely to support members during this unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic and the ensuing impact on the delivery of audiological services. Telehealth has received a significant amount of attention as a possible avenue to continue provision of some services with some special allowances made by the HPCSA and Allied Health Professions Council of South Africa (AHPCSA) during this time for their members (see resource list below).

SASLHA and SAAA have created a joint telehealth working group with the task of collating some of the most current guidelines and resources for members. These are attached in this communication in an effort to assist in the immediate crisis management (see below). Both associations, SASLHA and SAAA are aware that a mid-to-longer-term strategy is required to expand telehealth services to include the provision of care to new patients and use of instrumentation by a profession that is highly dependent on technology. To this end, the SASLHA and SAAA telehealth working group are working on a strategy and currently, this entails discussions and advocacy with the HPCSA and Medical Aid Schemes. SAAA and SASLHA have already embarked on this process with a [collaborative communique to medical aid schemes](#) to recognise telehealth consultations as an alternative model of service delivery during the COVID-19 period and subsequent support thereof by the Council for Medical Schemes. This was sent along with occupational therapy (OTASA) and physiotherapy (SASP) associations. Considering the continued impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the expectation of role expansion for telehealth services in audiology the SAAA and SASLHA telehealth working group is committed to providing guidelines on the type of services that could be provided, the resources available to support telehealth in audiology.

Before embarking on telehealth services we encourage members to carefully read and consider the guidelines provided by the HPCSA and others to ensure services are provided within the current framework. Below is a list of core resources related to telehealth services in audiology during the COVID-19 pandemic.

What videoconferencing equipment can I use for telehealth?

The HPCSA does not provide any specific guidelines in this regard. The Allied Health Professions Council of South Africa have however provided [useful guidance on software](#) to be used stating that only recognized and secure online software may be used in order to protect and guarantee the privacy and confidentiality of a patient:

- The software must have the ability to record all consultation in order to ensure that all consultations are recorded and added to patient records.
- The software must be secured from end-to-end in an effort to ensure that all patient information is protected.
- Full regard must be given to the Protection of Personal Information Act of 2013 in that, practitioner and therapist must conduct themselves in a responsible manner when collecting, processing, storing and sharing a patient's personal information.

In the US the [U.S. Department of Health & Human Services](#) has made special allowance for a number of videoconferencing platforms and can be [accessed here](#).

General COVID-19 Resources

1. [COVID-19 Corona Virus South African Resource Portal](#)

South African telehealth guidelines during COVID for audiology

1. HPCSA resources on telehealth
 - a. [Guidelines on telemedicine in South Africa](#) [9 March 2020]
 - b. [Guidance on the application of telemedicine guidelines during the COVID-19 Pandemic](#) [26 March 2020]
 - c. [COVID-19 Outbreak in South Africa: guidance to health practitioners](#) [Point 4 on Telehealth; 26 March 2020]
 - d. [HPCSA's General Ethical Guidelines for good practice in Telemedicine – booklet 10](#) [2016]
2. Allied Health Professions Council of South Africa
 - a. [COVID-19 – Guidelines: Telehealth and Telemedicine as a result of South African State of Disaster](#) [25 March 2020]

International telehealth guidelines during COVID for audiology

1. [UK Audiology COVID-19 Guidelines](#)
2. American Academy of Audiology - [COVID-19 Telehealth Update and Guidance](#)
3. [ASHA Telepractice Resources During COVID-19](#)

Telehealth training & tips

1. CPD Accredited Ida Course on *Tele-Audiology* - Available for free through [Ida Institute learning hall](#)
2. Hearing Review [April 3, 2020] - [Lively Offers Practical Tips on Using Telehealth During Covid-19 Pandemic](#)