

**NATIONAL
ASSOCIATION OF
NUTRITION
PROFESSIONALS**



DISTANCE CLIENTS FOR HOLISTIC NUTRITION PROFESSIONALS

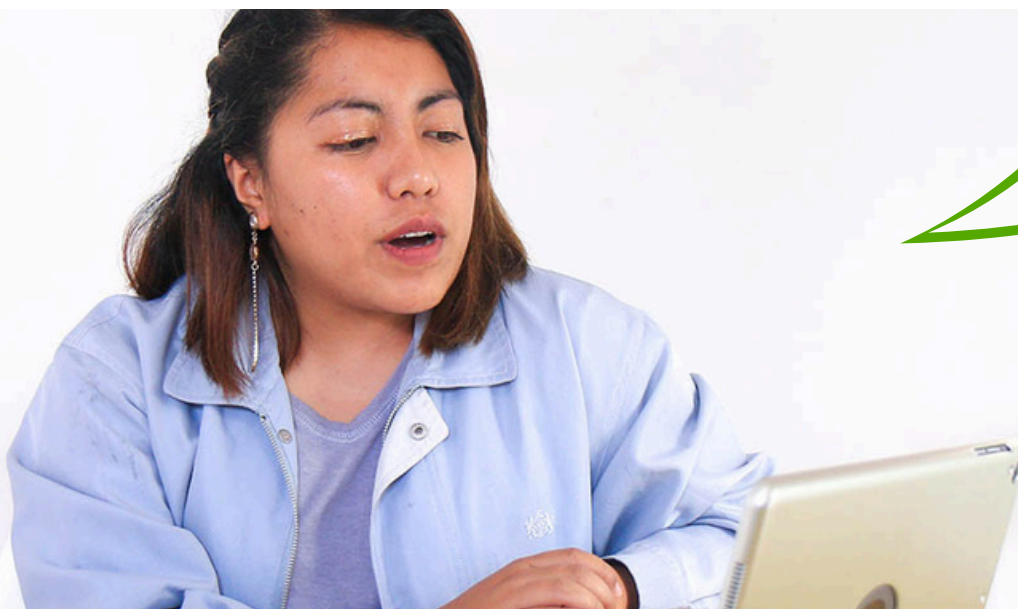


TELEHEALTH FOR UNLICENSED PRACTITIONERS: WORKING WITH DISTANCE CLIENTS

Telehealth has emerged as a transformative force in the healthcare industry, offering unprecedented opportunities for delivering healthcare services remotely. While traditionally, healthcare services were provided in person by licensed practitioners, there is a growing recognition of the potential for unlicensed practitioners to contribute meaningfully to health and wellness initiatives. Telehealth practice is subject to state laws and regulations, and providers of telehealth services must be licensed medical providers. The NANP has been working with external organizations to determine how our highly skilled yet unlicensed practitioners fit into this health paradigm; this document aims to provide guidance and best practices for unlicensed practitioners engaging in health services and to provide resources for our practitioners to review the laws of their state.

DEFINING TELEHEALTH

Each state differs in how it defines the term 'telehealth.' In most states, the term is explicitly defined in law and/or policy and regulations. 'Telehealth' is often used to reflect a broader definition encompassing "telemedicine," but the terms define the delivery of clinical services. Telehealth delivers and facilitates long-distance clinical healthcare and health-related services, which include medical care, provider-to-patient education, health information services, and self-care via telecommunications and digital communication technologies. Live video conferencing, mobile health apps, "store and forward" electronic transmission, and Remote Patient Monitoring (RPM) are examples of technologies used in telehealth.



DEFINING UNLICENSED PRACTITIONERS/HOLISTIC NUTRITION PROFESSIONALS




Holistic Nutrition Professionals (HNPs) are not licensed in any state and are considered unlicensed practitioners. HNPs possess relevant skills and knowledge to provide nutrition and wellness-related services to individuals and groups of people. Unlicensed practitioners include Holistic Nutrition Professionals, Health Coaches, and Wellness Advisors. The NANP, working with telehealth law experts, recommends that HNPs who are seeing clients virtually use the term “Distance Client” instead of referring to the services they offer as “Telehealth” or “Telemedicine.” Telehealth services pertain to the delivery of health care services for the purpose of diagnosing or treating a patient or consulting with other health care providers regarding a patient’s diagnosis or treatment. “Telehealth services” do not include an audio-only telephone, electronic mail message, facsimile transmission, or online questionnaire; this is how most Holistic Nutrition Professionals work with their “distance clients.”

LEGAL AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS



Before engaging in distance services, unlicensed practitioners must be aware of and comply with the legal and ethical considerations governing their practice. While they may not be subject to licensing requirements, they should be familiar with privacy laws, such as the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) in the United States. While not required to follow/implement HIPAA regulations in their practice, Holistic Nutrition Professionals should always ensure the confidentiality and security of client information; this is what we refer to as business best practices.



HNPs should also be transparent with clients, informing them in writing about their educational status and the limitations of their services. HNPs may not provide Medical Nutrition Therapy (MNT), which is the provision of nutrition care services for the treatment or management of a disease or medical condition. Please note that the definition of MNT may differ from state to state.

It is crucial to establish clear boundaries and communicate the nature of the services offered, emphasizing in writing and verbally that the services provided do not replace the expertise of licensed healthcare professionals.

RISK MITIGATION AND LIABILITY

Unlicensed practitioners should mitigate risks and minimize liability when providing distance services, including obtaining informed consent from clients, having waivers/disclaimers signed, clearly outlining the scope of services offered, and educating clients about potential risks associated with distance services (e.g., internet disruptions, time lapses in responses, security breaches, etc.). It is the responsibility of the Holistic Nutrition Professional to determine if the client's needs are outside of their Scope of Practice and, if that is the case, to refer that client to the appropriate licensed medical professional.

Additionally, unlicensed practitioners should have liability insurance to protect themselves in unforeseen circumstances. Collaborating with licensed medical professionals when appropriate and establishing a network of referral resources can also enhance the overall quality and safety of distance services provided by Holistic Nutrition Professionals.



TECHNOLOGY AND PLATFORM SELECTION



Appropriate platforms and technologies are crucial for effective communication and secure data transmission. Holistic Nutrition Professionals should consider using platforms that comply with relevant healthcare regulations and prioritize the privacy and security of client information. While HNPs are not legally required to comply with HIPAA, it is a business best practice to use the most secure software products available that will safeguard your client's personal information, just as you would keep hard copy files in a locked filing cabinet. Several client management software programs are available that meet these requirements and will help streamline your practice.

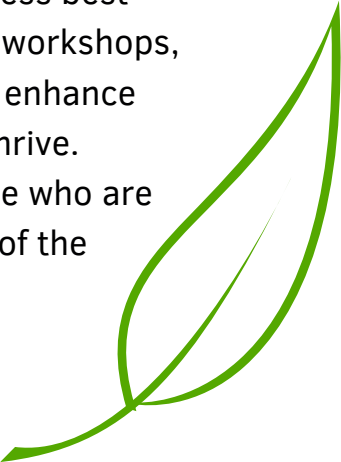
CLIENT MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE

- The Jane App
- Practice Better
- Simple Practice
- VSee
- Doxy.me
- Caspio
- thera-LINK
- GoToMeeting
- TheraNest
- and Zoom Health video conferencing



CONTINUING EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Holistic Nutrition Professionals should actively engage in continuing education and professional development opportunities to stay current with science-based, cutting-edge research in the nutrition field, business best practices, and industry standards. They should attend webinars, workshops, and conferences, investing in ongoing education to stay current, enhance their skills, expand their knowledge base, and help their clients thrive. Earning Continuing Education Credits (CECs) is required for those who are Board Certified in Holistic Nutrition® and Professional Members of the NANP.



CONCLUSION

Working with distance clients presents a unique opportunity for Holistic Nutrition Professionals to contribute to the healthcare landscape. HNPs can provide valuable and responsible services by understanding and adhering to legal and ethical considerations, mitigating risks, selecting appropriate technology, and prioritizing ongoing professional development.

HNPs must approach distance services with a commitment to high standards, transparency, and client well-being, recognizing their role as complementary to, rather than a substitute for, the expertise of licensed healthcare professionals.



The NANP recommends that practitioners working with distance clients become familiar with the Telehealth Laws of their state. This information is available through the Center for Connected Health Policy: <https://www.cchpca.org/>



National Association of
Nutrition Professionals
LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS
DIVISION