

360-3-.07 Practice Through Electronic or Other Such Means

(a) Under O.C.G.A. §§ 43-34-8 and 43-1-19, the Board is authorized to take disciplinary action against licensees for unprofessional conduct, and in connection therewith, to establish standards of practice. Except as otherwise provided, in order for a physician to practice within the minimum standards of practice while providing treatment and/or consultation recommendations by electronic or other such means, all the following conditions must be met:

- (1) All treatment and/or consultations must be done by Georgia licensed practitioners;
- (2) A history of the patient shall be available to the Georgia licensed physician, physician assistant or advanced practice registered nurse who is providing treatment or consultation via electronic or other such means;
- (3) A Georgia licensed physician, physician assistant or advanced practice registered nurse either:
 - a. Has personally seen and examined the patient and provides ongoing or intermittent care by electronic or other such means; or
 - b. Is providing medical care by electronic or other such means at the request of a physician, physician assistant or advanced practice registered nurse licensed in Georgia who has personally seen and examined the patient; or
 - c. Is providing medical care by electronic or other such means at the request of a Public Health Nurse, a Public School Nurse, the Department of Family and Children's Services, law enforcement, community mental health center or through an established child advocacy center for the protection of a minor, and the physician, physician assistant or advanced practice registered nurse is able to examine the patient using technology and peripherals that are equal or superior to an examination done personally by a provider within that provider's standard of care; or
 - d. Is able to examine the patient using technology and peripherals that are equal or superior to an examination done personally by a provider within that provider's standard of care.
- (4) The Georgia licensed physician, physician assistant or advanced practice registered nurse providing treatment or consultations by electronic or other means must maintain patient records on the patient and must document the evaluation and treatment along with the identity of the practitioners providing the service by electronic or other means, and if there is a referring practitioner, a copy of this record must also be provided to the referring physician, physician assistant or advanced practice registered nurse;

(5) To delegate to a nurse practitioner or to supervise a physician assistant doing telemedicine, the physician must document to the board that that the provision of care by telemedicine is in his or her scope of practice and that the NP or PA has demonstrated competence in the provision of care by telemedicine.

(6) Patients treated by electronic or other such means or patient's agent must be given the name, credentials and emergency contact information for the Georgia licensed physician, physician assistant and/or advanced practice registered nurse providing the treatment or consultation. Emergency contact information does not need to be provided to those treated within the prison system while incarcerated but should be provided to the referring provider. For the purposes of this rule, "credentials" is defined as the area of practice and training for physicians, and for physician assistants and advanced practice registered nurses, "credentials" shall mean the area of licensure and must include the name of the delegating physician or supervising physician;

(7) The patient being treated via electronic or other means or the patient's agent must be provided with clear, appropriate, accurate instructions on follow-up in the event of needed emergent care related to the treatment. In the case of prison patients, prison staff will be provided this information if the consult is provided to an inmate; and

(8) The physician, physician assistant or nurse practitioner who provides care or treatment for a patient by electronic or other such means must make diligent efforts to have the patient seen and examined in person by a Georgia licensed physician, physician assistant or nurse practitioner at least annually.

(b) This rule should not be interpreted to interfere with care and treatment by telephonic communication in an established physician-patient relationship, call coverage for established physician-patients relationships, or telephone and internet consultations between physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, other healthcare providers or child protection agencies.

(c) This rule does not authorize the prescription of controlled substances for the treatment of pain or chronic pain by electronic or other such means. All treatment of pain or chronic pain must be in compliance with Rule 360-3-.06.

(d) Nothing in this rule shall excuse a physician, nurse practitioner or physician assistant from ordering appropriate laboratory or other diagnostic tests needed to make diagnoses within the minimum standard of care.

(e) Nothing in this rule shall supersede any requirements provided for by other rules or laws.

(f) Licensees practicing by electronic or other means will be held to the same standard of care as licensees employing more traditional in-person medical care. A failure to conform to the appropriate standard of care, whether that care is rendered in person or via electronic or other such means, may subject the licensee to disciplinary action by the Board.

Authority: O.C.G.A. Sections 43-34-5(c), 43-34-8, 43-34-23 and 43-34-25, 43-34-31, 43-34-103 and 43-34-105.