



Technology: Recommendations to Advance Social Connection



Coalition to End
Social Isolation
& Loneliness

We envision a society where every individual will one day have the opportunities and supports necessary to be socially engaged.

The Challenge

Social isolation and loneliness take a toll on individuals, leading to poorer health outcomes, higher rates of mortality, and higher healthcare costs. Social connection, or lack of social connection, is a social determinant of health that influences physical, mental, and emotional health outcomes. A lack of social connection has been compared to the health impact of smoking 15 cigarettes a day.

Our Recommendations

The Coalition recognizes that use of technology can facilitate social connections, however it may also lead to an increase in an individual's sense of isolation, particularly among teens and younger adults. With recent widespread advances in information and communication technologies, we need to evaluate which of these can be leveraged to increase social connectedness.



To leverage innovative technological solutions that foster social connection, policymakers should

1. Permanently expand telehealth flexibilities and reimbursement policies and grant HHS authority to expand Medicare telehealth services during all future emergencies and disasters.



2. Foster public-private and cross-agency partnerships to develop a plan to provide equity in access to effective technologies to individuals who are at high-risk for social isolation.



3. Extend flexibilities for federally funded resources that expand the availability and affordability of broadband services and hardware for communities with limited access to quality broadband internet services, prioritizing socioeconomically marginalized communities.



4. Evaluate the efficacy and safety of information and assistive technologies to have a better understanding of which technologies, digital tools or usages promote and facilitate social connection and which exacerbate social isolation and loneliness.



5. Increase funding for Older Americans Act Title III B Supportive Services which is used by the Aging Network to implement social engagement programs such as telephone reassurance services, arts and creative expression activities, and intergenerational programs.



6. Provide states and managed care organizations additional guidance on how they can implement technology-based screening and intervention tools, like the Rocky Mountain Health Plan's screening tool for social isolation and loneliness in their Medicaid and Medicare programs.



Join us in advocating for solutions that encourage greater social connection. Read our full 2023-2024 Policy Priorities [here](#).

About Us

The Coalition to End Social Isolation & Loneliness, founded in 2018, advocates for policy change that combats the adverse effects of social isolation and loneliness. The Coalition represents some of the most influential consumer groups, patient advocates, health plans, community-based organizations, behavioral health groups, and private sector innovators in the United States. Visit our website at www.endsocialisolation.org