

Wyoming Telehealth Network

February 2023 Provider Spotlight

Carissa Lane, PT, DPT, INHC



Carissa Lane is a Wyoming Native, growing up in Cheyenne, WY and completing her undergraduate degree in Kinesiology & Health Promotion through the University of Wyoming. She then went on to complete her Doctoral degree in Physical Therapy from Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff, AZ with honors in 2017. Carissa initially entered the PT field practicing in the inpatient rehabilitation setting, but soon transitioned into various settings including outpatient neuro, outpatient ortho, neuro wellness, and home health. She now works part time in a telehealth musculoskeletal physical therapy company and owns her own virtual wellness coaching business, [Carissa Lane Wellness](#), specializing in burnout prevention/recovery, stress management, and holistic health for healthcare professionals. In 2022, she obtained her Integrative Nutrition Health Coaching certification and continues to prioritize lifestyle medicine with all of her patients and clients. Carissa now lives in St. Augustine, FL with her significant other and two dogs. She is currently a licensed physical therapist in multiple states (FL, TX, PA, NY, NJ) providing musculoskeletal care to individuals who might not have access to these services otherwise, and treats health coaching clients all over the United States. While Carissa no longer lives in Wyoming, she continues to have deep connections to the state and communities, and is looking to expand her reach to help individuals in need of high quality care and support.

1. When did you first hear about telehealth? How did you feel about it then? How do you feel about it now?

Provider: I had heard about telehealth prior to the start of the pandemic, but did not really know how physical therapy or health coaching could play a role. As everything began to pivot during the pandemic, healthcare had to follow suit in order to provide continued access to individuals who needed care, but weren't able to get it due to low staffing, overcrowded hospitals, or fear of being out in the community.

Coming out of the pandemic, I was feeling very burned out as a rehab provider, so I decided to take a step back from treating patients. During this time, I started researching different telehealth opportunities as the appeal for remote work was growing. As a physical therapist and health coach, I strongly believe that offering telehealth services is innovative and a great option for most people. I am a strong advocate of telehealth services and expanding access to rural or underserved communities in order to address all pillars of lifestyle medicine.

2. When did you begin offering telehealth services? What prompted the need to offer these services?

Provider: I have worked in telehealth physical therapy now for two (2) years and can confidently say that providing healthcare remotely has the ability to reach many more individuals than the traditional model due to accessibility. Once I finished my health coaching certification program in early 2022, I decided that the best option for my business was to be offered through a virtual telehealth format in order to expand my client network and reach more individuals needing care but not necessarily having access. As healthcare providers, we are typically limited on time, energy, and accessibility, so I wanted to provide a low friction option to clinicians to feel supported in their health goals without having to sacrifice time or energy driving to a physical location to seek care.

3. What motivates you to continue offering telehealth services?

Provider: I have now been able to coach individuals in Alabama, Texas, Oregon, Canada, and locally in Florida through personal referrals. I am building my community, so I desire to have outreach all over the US and possibly globally. As stated above, I experienced burn out very early in my career as a PT and did not feel supported by the systems in place. Healthcare is not designed to protect the providers who come into the profession with the intent to help and heal, so more often than not, healthcare providers sacrifice much more of themselves (and their health) just to meet unrealistic productivity standards. I have worked diligently to restore my own health and get to the root cause of my burnout issues so I can now share that knowledge with others. During my self healing journey, I wish that I had the support of someone else to guide me through the challenges I faced, so I now want to be that resource to others who feel like they are struggling to overcome burnout, but don't know where to start.

4. What is your proudest accomplishment with telehealth?

Provider: I love seeing the excitement of patients and clients who have met their pain or health goals quickly without the need for multiple visits. It is so exciting to see clients feel empowered and autonomous in their health decisions, rather than being told what to think or do.

5. What advice would you give patients wanting to try telehealth?

Provider: I would strongly advocate that most individuals try telehealth. It can be an affordable option to receive care from multiple providers without having to sacrifice time, driving time, or caregiver support. You have access to a wide variety of excellent providers and get the opportunity to choose who to work with, rather than being limited to only providers in your local area.

6. What advice would you give providers wanting to start offering telehealth?

Provider: I read an interesting article recently that discussed how Gen Z values in person care more than telehealth due to constant connectivity to technology, however, they prefer to have more flexibility, quality care, and more touchpoints for scheduling when needed. While younger generations might want a more traditional model of care, healthcare providers must adapt to the different needs of each generation and be able to provide services, regardless of the industry, that go beyond the town you live in. When getting started in telehealth, spend time researching the best digital platform for providing your services and try it out prior to investing. Once you are providing services, there will be a slight learning curve as more emphasis is placed on active listening during the subjective exam rather than a hands on approach. The best piece of advice I received when I first started in telehealth was to be open minded and ready for change. Our digital world is constantly evolving, so we must be willing to evolve with it.

7. What was the biggest barrier in providing telehealth services? Have you overcome it?

Provider: While telehealth is a great option for most people, I do have to say that individuals who are not technologically savvy may struggle if they don't have someone to support them in starting up a virtual call. Additionally, internet connection has been a big barrier to providing excellent services as connectivity issues can make the calls feel disjointed and impersonal. Lastly, from a physical therapy perspective, individuals who are largely debilitated will need a caregiver present during calls to ensure safety. There are limitations in checking vitals and providing physical testing, but it is a great alternative for basic assessments and check ins. In an attempt to overcome these barriers, I lay out expectations early on how to provide a best in class service by highlighting needing strong internet connection, support to set up the call if unable to do so independently, adequate lighting in order to create a meaningful connection, and ensuring that they have the resources and education necessary to navigate their own health (BP cuff at home, SpO2 monitor, adequate assistive devices, etc.).

8. How do you think implementing telehealth now will affect how things will be done at your organization after the pandemic is over?

Provider: I think telehealth is here to stay. There is potential for telehealth to change the care model by emphasizing more on a value based model of quality care over quantity of units billed. As a clinician, I see so much value in these types of services in addressing social determinants of health and healthcare inequalities. With my coaching business, I will continue to scale in a virtual format, but am open to having a hybrid model if someone desires to be seen in person. In my physical therapy organization, we are continuing to expand services through house calls in order to support individuals needing our services but might not yet be able to transition fully to a telehealth format. It is all about meeting the

needs of your population where they are at, then thinking innovatively on how to overcome barriers and access to care.

9. Is there anything you learned the hard way in telehealth implementation?

Provider: Not really. Technology has never been my strong suit (ironically), so it has been a challenge dealing with bugs or tech issues that will inevitably arise. As a telehealth provider, you have to be flexible and have the ability to adapt to situations that may not go as planned without sacrificing care.

10. Do you have any telehealth hacks or tricks?

Provider: Listen more than you speak - often your clients will tell you exactly what you need to know or they will figure out their own needs just by speaking it aloud. Allow them to explore their health concerns with curiosity as this will likely increase their ability to advocate for their needs and feel empowered to make consistent decisions toward bettering their health.

Bonus Question: Do you have a favorite podcast, book, or author?

Provider: I am an avid podcast listener and reader, so this is tough to narrow down. I would say one of my favorite books is Atomic Habits by James Clear. There are so many practical tips in that book. As far as podcasts, this is also tough, but one of my go-to's is The Doctor's Farmacy with Dr. Mark Hyman. This podcast focuses on a functional medicine approach to health and is chocked full of fascinating information.