



Telephone and Video Visits UPDATED

March 23, 2020

TO: CURRENTLY ENROLLED MEDI-CAL PROVIDERS INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO PHYSICIANS, NURSES, MENTAL HEALTH PRACTITIONERS, SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER PRACTITIONERS, AS WELL AS FQHCS, RHCS, TRIBAL 638 CLINICS

SUBJECT: EMERGENCY TELEHEALTH GUIDANCE - COVID-19 PANDEMIC

PURPOSE: In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, it is imperative that providers practice “social distancing”. However, members also need to be able to continue to have access to necessary medical care. Accordingly, Medi-Cal providers including those mentioned above must take steps to allow members to obtain health care via telehealth when medically appropriate to do so as provided below. The treating health care practitioner at the distant site believes that the Medi-Cal benefits or services being provided are clinically appropriate based upon evidence-based medicine and/or best practices to be delivered via telehealth, subject to oral or written consent by the beneficiary.*

Due to state wide public health “Stay at Home” order this implies that video visits are **preferred when available. There are documented circumstances involved that prevent the visit from being conducted face-to-face, such as the patient is quarantined at home, local or state guidelines direct that the patient remain at home, the patient lives remotely and does not have access to the internet or the internet does not support Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) compliance, etc.*

Telephonic or Video Visits: With the federal declaration of a state of emergency, FQHCs, Rural health clinics, and Tribal 638 Clinics are allowed to count video visits and telephone visits the same as in-office visits, for prospective payment. Any clinician eligible to bill for office visits may conduct a telephone or video visit with a patient in lieu of an office visit by way of Zoom or any other HIPAA compliant platform that supports provider to patient communication for patient care. Such visits must last at least 5 minutes, must be documented in the patient’s medical record and are subject to oral or written consent by the patient.

Required Codes for Medi-Cal Providers and FQHC’s, RHC’s and Tribal 638 Clinics

- Existing face to face codes apply when a Medi-Cal provider/clinician is billing PHC for video/telephonic visits. **Example codes for the PCP Setting: 99201 – 99204, 99212 – 99214**
- **The CPT or HCPCS code(s) must be billed using:**
 - Place of Service Code “02”
- **Use appropriate telehealth modifiers**
 - **Synchronous**, interactive audio and telecommunications systems: **Modifier 95**
 - **Asynchronous** store and forward telecommunications systems: **Modifier GQ**
- **PCP QIP** - Please note that telephone and video visits will count towards the Primary Care Provider Quality Improvement Program (PCP QIP) Per Member Per Year (PMPY) statistics, which is part of the new gateway measure in 2020.

Additional Required Codes for FQHC’s, RHC’s and Tribal 638 Clinics

- **Use HCPCS code T1015** (medical, per visit), which would be paid at the Prospective Payment System (PPS) or All-Inclusive Rate (AIR), respectively.

Telephone and Video Visits UPDATED

Telehealth Exclusions

- Below are some examples (not exhaustive) of benefits or services that would not be appropriate for a delivery via a telehealth modality:
 - Benefits or services that are performed in an operating room or while the patient is under anesthesia
 - Benefits or services that require direct visualization or instrumentation of bodily structures
 - Benefits or services that involve sampling of tissue or insertion/removal of medical devices
 - Benefits or services that otherwise require the in-person presence of the patient for any reason
- **For virtual/telephonic visits that do not meet the requirements**, the billing entity should bill the corresponding virtual/telephonic visit CPT or HCPCS and will be reimbursed the Medi-Cal fee-for-service (FFS) rate on file for the applicable procedure code (i.e. G0071 for FQHC/RHC and G2012 for others including tribal health).

Resources:

DHCS APL on COVID-19 Telehealth

<https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/formsandpubs/Documents/MMCDAPLsandPolicyLetters/APL2019/APL19-009COVID-19.pdf>

CMS COVID-19 FAQs for State Medicaid and CHIP Agencies <https://www.medicaid.gov/state-resource-center/downloads/covid-19-faqs.pdf>

Zoom Information - Sign up for a free Zoom account at <https://zoom.us/signup>. If you have any questions about Zoom, you can email info@zoom.us or call **1-888-799-9666**. Or visit online at <https://zoom.us/healthcare>

Department of Health Care Services COVID-19 Medi-Cal Services and Telehealth Notice:

http://files.medi-cal.ca.gov/pubsdoco/newsroom/newsroom_30375.asp

Telehealth delivers health care and public health services by utilizing information and communication technologies to enable the diagnosis, consultation, treatment, education, care management, and self-management of a patient at a distance from health care providers.