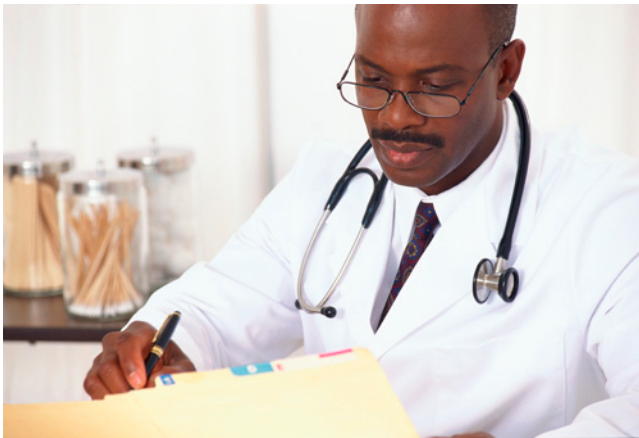


DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services



Telehealth Services

RURAL HEALTH FACT SHEET SERIES



This publication provides the following information about services furnished to eligible Medicare beneficiaries via a telecommunications system:

- ❖ Originating sites;
- ❖ Distant site practitioners;
- ❖ Telehealth services;
- ❖ Billing and payment for professional services furnished via telehealth;
- ❖ Billing and payment for the originating site facility fee; and
- ❖ Resources.

Medicare will pay for a limited number of Part B services that are furnished by a physician or practitioner to an eligible beneficiary via a telecommunications system. For eligible telehealth services, the use of a telecommunications system substitutes for an in-person encounter.

Originating Sites

An originating site is the location of an eligible Medicare beneficiary at the time the service being furnished

via telecommunications system occurs. Medicare beneficiaries are eligible for telehealth services only if they are presented from an originating site located in a rural Health Professional Shortage Area or in a county outside of a Metropolitan Statistical Area. Entities that participate in a Federal telemedicine demonstration project approved by (or receiving funding from) the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services as of December 31, 2000, qualify as originating sites regardless of geographic location.

The originating sites authorized by law are:

- ❖ The office of a physician or practitioner;
- ❖ Hospitals;
- ❖ Critical Access Hospitals (CAH);
- ❖ Rural Health Clinics (RHC);
- ❖ Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC);
- ❖ Hospital-based or CAH-based Renal Dialysis Centers (including satellites);
- ❖ Skilled Nursing Facilities (SNF); and
- ❖ Community Mental Health Centers (CMHC).

Note: Independent Renal Dialysis Facilities are not eligible originating sites.

Distant Site Practitioners

Practitioners at the distant site who may furnish and receive payment for covered telehealth services (subject to State law) are:

- ❖ Physicians;
- ❖ Nurse practitioners (NP);
- ❖ Physician assistants (PA);
- ❖ Nurse midwives;



- ❖ Clinical nurse specialists (CNS);
- ❖ Clinical psychologists (CP) and clinical social workers (CSW) (CPs and CSWs cannot bill for psychotherapy services that include medical evaluation and management services under Medicare. These practitioners may not bill or receive payment for Current Procedural Terminology [CPT] codes 90805, 90807, and 90809); and
- ❖ Registered dietitians or nutrition professionals.

Telehealth Services

As a condition of payment, an interactive audio and video telecommunications system must be used that permits real-time communication between the physician or practitioner at the distant site and the beneficiary at the originating site. Asynchronous “store and forward” technology is permitted only in Federal telehealth demonstration programs conducted in Alaska or Hawaii.

The current list of Medicare telehealth services includes:

- ❖ Initial inpatient consultations (Healthcare Common Procedure Coding system [HCPCS] codes G0425 – G0427);
- ❖ Follow-up inpatient telehealth consultations furnished to beneficiaries in hospitals or SNFs (HCPCS codes G0406 – G0408);
- ❖ Office or other outpatient visits (CPT codes 99201 – 99215);
- ❖ Subsequent hospital care services, with the limitation of 1 telehealth visit every 3 days (CPT codes 99231 – 99233);
- ❖ Subsequent nursing facility care services, with the limitation of 1 telehealth visit every 30 days (CPT codes 99307 – 99310);
- ❖ Individual and group kidney disease education services (HCPCS codes G0420 – G0421);
- ❖ Individual and group diabetes self-management training services, with a minimum of 1 hour of in-person

instruction to be furnished in the initial year training period to ensure effective injection training (HCPCS codes G0108 – G0109);

- ❖ Individual and group health and behavior assessment and intervention (CPT codes 96150 – 96154);
- ❖ Individual psychotherapy (CPT codes 90804 – 90809);
- ❖ Pharmacologic management (CPT code 90862);
- ❖ Psychiatric diagnostic interview examination (CPT code 90801);
- ❖ End-Stage Renal Disease (ESRD)-related services included in the monthly capitation payment (CPT codes 90951, 90952, 90954, 90955, 90957, 90958, 90960, and 90961);
- ❖ Individual and group medical nutrition therapy (HCPCS code G0270 and CPT codes 97802 – 97804); and
- ❖ Neurobehavioral status examination (CPT code 96116).

For ESRD-related services, at least one “hands on” visit (not telehealth) must be furnished each month to examine the vascular access site by a physician, NP, PA, or CNS.

Billing and Payment for Professional Services Furnished Via Telehealth

Distant site physicians and practitioners submit claims for telehealth services using the appropriate CPT or HCPCS code for the professional service along with the telehealth modifier GT, “via interactive audio and video telecommunications system” (e.g., 99201 GT). By coding and billing the “GT” modifier with a covered telehealth procedure code, the distant site physician or practitioner certifies that the beneficiary was present at an eligible originating site when the telehealth service was furnished. By coding and billing the “GT” modifier with a covered ESRD-related service telehealth code, the distant site physician or practitioner certifies that one visit per month was furnished “hands on” to examine the vascular access site.



In the case of Federal telemedicine demonstration programs conducted in Alaska or Hawaii, physicians and practitioners submit the appropriate CPT or HCPCS code for the professional service along with the telehealth modifier GQ, “via asynchronous telecommunications system” (e.g., 99201 GQ).

By using the “GQ” modifier, the distant site physician or practitioner certifies that the asynchronous medical file was collected and transmitted to the

physician or practitioner at the distant site from a Federal telemedicine demonstration project conducted in Alaska or Hawaii.

Physicians and practitioners at the distant site bill the Medicare Carrier or A/B Medicare Administrative Contractor (MAC) for covered telehealth services. Distant site physicians and practitioners are paid 80 percent of the appropriate Medicare Physician Fee Schedule (PFS) amount for telehealth services. When distant site physicians or practitioners are located in a CAH and have reassigned their billing rights to a CAH that has elected the Optional (Elective) Method of reimbursement, services are billed to the Fiscal Intermediary (FI) or A/B MAC by the CAH and the payment amount is 80 percent of the PFS for telehealth services.

Billing and Payment for the Originating Site Facility Fee

For telehealth services, originating sites are paid an originating site facility fee as described by HCPCS code Q3014. The originating site facility fee is a separately billable Part B payment. Physician and practitioner offices that serve as telehealth originating sites bill the Medicare Carrier or A/B MAC for the originating site facility fee. Hospitals, CAHs, RHCs, FQHCs, hospital-based or CAH-based Renal Dialysis Centers, SNFs, and CMHCs that serve as Medicare telehealth originating sites bill the FI or A/B MAC.

Note: When a CMHC serves as an originating site, the originating site facility fee does not count toward the number of services used to determine payment for partial hospitalization services.

HELPFUL WEBSITES

American Hospital Association Rural Health Care
http://www.aha.org/aha/key_issues/rural/index.html

Critical Access Hospitals Center
<http://www.cms.gov/center/cah.asp>

Disproportionate Share Hospital
http://www.cms.gov/AcutelInpatientPPS/05_dsh.asp

Federally Qualified Health Centers Center
<http://www.cms.gov/center/fqhc.asp>

Health Resources and Services Administration
<http://www.hrsa.gov>

Hospital Center
<http://www.cms.gov/center/hospital.asp>

HPSA/PSA (Physician Bonuses)
<http://www.cms.gov/hpsapsaphysicianbonuses>

Medicare Learning Network
<http://www.cms.gov/MLNGenInfo>

Resources

Additional information about Medicare telehealth services can be accessed in Chapter 15 of the Medicare Benefit Policy Manual (Pub. 100-2) and Chapter 12 of the Medicare Claims Processing Manual (Pub. 100-4) located at <http://www.cms.gov/Manuals/IOM/list.asp> and at <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/Telehealth> on the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) website.



National Association of Community Health Centers
<http://www.nachc.org>

National Association of Rural Health Clinics
<http://www.narhc.org>

National Rural Health Association
<http://www.nrharural.org>

Rural Health Clinics Center
<http://www.cms.gov/center/rural.asp>

Rural Assistance Center
<http://www.raconline.org>

Swing Bed Providers
http://www.cms.gov/SNFPPS/03_SwingBed.asp

Telehealth
<http://www.cms.gov/Telehealth>

U.S. Census Bureau
<http://www.Census.gov>

REGIONAL OFFICE RURAL HEALTH COORDINATORS

Below is a list of contact information for CMS Regional Office Rural Health Coordinators who provide technical, policy, and operational assistance on rural health issues.

Region I – Boston

Rick Hoover

E-mail: rick.hoover@cms.hhs.gov

Telephone: (617) 565-1258

States: Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont

Region II – New York

Miechal Lefkowitz

E-mail: miechal.lefkowitz@cms.hhs.gov

Telephone: (212) 616-2517

States: New Jersey, New York, Puerto Rico, and Virgin Islands

Region III – Philadelphia

Patrick Hamilton

E-mail: patrick.hamilton@cms.hhs.gov

Telephone: (215) 861-4097

States: Delaware, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia, and the District of Columbia

Region IV – Atlanta

Lana Dennis

E-mail: lane.dennis@cms.hhs.gov

Telephone: (404) 562-7379

States: Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee

Region V – Chicago

Christine Davidson

E-mail: christine.davidson@cms.hhs.gov

Telephone: (312) 886-3642

States: Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin

Region VI – Dallas

Becky Peal-Sconce

E-mail: becky.peal-sconce@cms.hhs.gov

Telephone: (214) 767-6444

States: Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas

Region VII – Kansas City

Claudia Odgers

E-mail: claudia.odgers@cms.hhs.gov

Telephone: (816) 426-6524

States: Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, and Nebraska

Region VIII – Denver

Lyla Nichols

E-mail: lyla.nichols@cms.hhs.gov

Telephone: (303) 844-6218

States: Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming

Region IX – San Francisco

Neal Logue

E-mail: neal.logue@cms.hhs.gov

Telephone: (415) 744-3551

States: Arizona, California, Hawaii, Nevada, Guam, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, American Samoa, Marshall Island, Republic of Palau, and Federated States of Micronesia

Region X – Seattle

Teresa Cumpton

E-mail: teresa.cumpton@cms.hhs.gov

Telephone: (206) 615-2391

States: Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington



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