



Subject: Telehealth
Responsible Department: Provider Relations
Approval: Director, Provider Relations

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POLICY

OSU Health Plan will provide reimbursement for Telemedicine and Telehealth services in which the healthcare professional and the patient are not at the same site. Examples include: services delivered by internet through interactive audio/visual devices or other interactive communication platforms.

DEFINITIONS

Telehealth/Telemedicine Telehealth is the direct delivery of health care services to a patient (a) via synchronous (“at the same time”), interactive, real-time electronic communication comprising both audio and video elements or (b) activities that are asynchronous (“not at the same time”) and do not have both audio and video elements such as telephone calls, images transmitted via facsimile machine, and electronic mail. Telehealth/telemedicine will be referred to as telehealth in this document.

Interactive Audio and Video Telecommunication, Interactive Audio and Visual Transmissions, Audio-Visual Communication Technology Medical information is communicated in real-time with the use of interactive audio-only and/or audio-video communications equipment. The real-time communication is between the patient and a distant physician or health care specialist who is performing the service reported. The patient must be present and participating throughout the communication.

Originating Site The location of a patient at the time the service being furnished via a telecommunications system occurs.

Distant Site The location of a provider at the time the service being provided via a telecommunications system occurs. This location needs to be a HIPAA Compliant Clinically Appropriate Location. Examples include: physician or practitioner offices, hospitals, critical access hospitals, rural health clinics, federally qualified health centers, and skilled nursing facilities.

Eligible Providers Under this policy, the providers that can use telemedicine include:

- Physicians
- Certified Nurse practitioners
- Physician assistants
- Certified nurse midwives
- Clinical nurse specialists
- Clinical psychologists
- Licensed independent social workers
- Licensed professional clinical counselors
- Licensed independent marriage and family therapists
- Registered dietitians/Nutrition professionals
- Licensed independent chemical dependency practitioners

APPLICABILITY

This policy is applicable to all licensed medical professionals in accordance with state laws regarding telemedicine.

POLICY GUIDELINES

Some of the most common service areas that telehealth and telemedicine are utilized in are: primary care, radiology, psychiatry, dermatology, ophthalmology, nephrology, obstetrics, oncology, pathology, and rehabilitation. This policy is not limited to these areas and utilization in other service areas is expected.

OSUHP will consider for reimbursement telehealth services which are recognized by The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and appended with modifier GQ or POS 02, as well as services recognized by the AMA included in Appendix P of CPT and appended with modifier 95. For a current list of services payable under the Medicare Physician Fee Schedule when furnished via telehealth, visit <https://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Medicare-General-Information/Telehealth/Telehealth-Codes> .

OSUHP will cover telemedicine and telehealth visits. However, there are exclusions to what OSUHP considers appropriate. These exclusions include:

1. Telehealth provided through non-HIPAA compliant telehealth platforms. These platforms include FaceTime, Skype, and other non-secure, non-approved platforms.
2. Telehealth provided by a provider located in a setting that is not clinically appropriate. Examples of this may include at home, in a hotel room, in a public area, and others.

Types of Services Covered

The following telehealth services will be covered:

1. **Brief Check-Ins.** Brief communication technology-based services, also known as “virtual check-ins” or telephone visits, may be conducted under the following guidelines:
 - a. Patient is already established with provider (i.e. has visited provider within last 3 years).
 - b. Virtual check-in is real-time, interactive audio only or synchronous audio/visual.
 - c. Virtual check-in is not originating from an E/M visit within last 7 days.
 - d. Virtual check-in does not result in a follow-up visit within 24 hours or soonest available appointment.
 - e. Virtual check-in lasts between 5-10 minutes in duration.
2. **e-Visits.** Patients may also engage with providers through messaging features known as “e-Visits”. Messaging between provider and patients must be done through a HIPAA-compliant platform, such as Epic’s MyChart platform for billing eligibility.
3. **E-Consultation.** One physician can consult with a second physician for advice about a patient’s condition for non-emergent conditions through structured EMR facilitated communication
4. **Clinician to Clinician.** Originating site provider requests emergent evaluation and consult from distant site. Provider utilizes audio-video technology for patient presenting with a variety of cases – ambulatory, emergent, inpatient.
5. **Video Visit.** A scheduled encounter with a physician and an established patient from one site to another using live, interactive audio and visual transmissions. This connection often occurs through MyChart (EPIC) video visits.

Due to the dependence on technology in providing telehealth/telemedicine, if there is a technological failure, disconnection, or other technological reason the visit is not fully completed, reimbursement is not guaranteed. OSUHP will only reimburse for fully completed visits via real-time audio/visual interaction between the patient and provider.

Utilization of telehealth visits will be regularly monitored for compliance.

RESOURCES

This policy was developed referencing Ohio laws and rules, as well as other insurers' telemedicine policies. OSUHP referenced the practices of the following payers in developing its telemedicine benefits and policy: Medicare, Ohio Medicaid, Aetna, United Healthcare, and Humana.

Attachments:

Contact the Health Plan Privacy Officer at 292-2542

Policy Approved by:

Konstantine Papadopoulos

Department Director

03/23/2020

Date