

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
Department of Health Care Finance



Office of the Senior Deputy Director-Medicaid Director

Transmittal # 20-23

TO: District of Columbia Medicaid Dental Providers

FROM: Melisa Byrd
Senior Deputy Director and State Medicaid Director

DATE: May 14, 2020

SUBJECT: **Billing for Teledentistry Encounters**

Purpose

The purpose of this transmittal is to inform all Medicaid dental providers of the process to bill for teledentistry for DC Medicaid beneficiaries. The Department of Health Care Finance (DHCF) is committed to ensuring DC Medicaid beneficiaries have access to oral health services during the COVID-19 public health emergency and services provided via telemedicine. As a supplement to recent telemedicine guidance published to the DHCF website at <https://dhcf.dc.gov/page/telemedicine>, DHCF is updating its guidance to inform dental providers how they should bill for services provided via teledentistry. DHCF will allow the enrolled dental providers to provide oral health assessments, to triage beneficiaries, and to disseminate oral health education to beneficiaries at a remote location. Additionally, it will allow dental providers to utilize innovative methods to determine if the beneficiary's assessment requires urgent or emergent care.

Background

On March 12, 2020, DHCF adopted an emergency and proposed rule that established authority for Medicaid reimbursable services to be delivered in a beneficiary's home to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of residents is not threatened by a lapse of in-person access to covered healthcare services due to the threat of infection with COVID-19. The Emergency and Proposed Rule is effective until July 10, 2020, unless DHCF supersedes it by publishing a Notice of Final Rulemaking in the *DC Register*.¹ The emergency and proposed rule authorizes Medicaid to reimburse providers for health services delivered to a beneficiary in their home via telemedicine and clarifies that distant site providers are responsible for ensuring that technology in use meets the standard of care when the beneficiary's home is the originating site. In addition, the rule outlines the standards governing eligibility for Medicaid beneficiaries receiving healthcare services via telemedicine under the Medicaid fee-for-service and MCO programs.

¹ Medicaid Reimbursable Telemedicine Services Notice of Emergency and Proposed Rulemaking (<https://dhcf.dc.gov/node/1468036>).

Teledentistry

Dental providers may render provider-to-patient teledentistry services via synchronous transmission consistent with requirements set forth in Section 910 (Medicaid Reimbursable Telemedicine Services) in Chapter 9 (Medicaid Services) of Title 29 (Public Welfare) of the District of Columbia Municipal Regulations. On March 18, 2020 in response to further guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and public need to expand access to telemedicine services, under the Mayor's authority, DHCF authorizes payment for audio-only visits delivered via telephone.² To assist providers during the public health emergency period, DHCF highlights that the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) issued guidance regarding the HIPAA requirements and the use of telehealth remote communications during the COVID-19 public health emergency.³

Dental providers using teledentistry to triage patients or offering an oral health evaluation to determine if the oral health condition is urgent or emergent shall use the following Current Dental Terminology (CDT) codes for reimbursement and to document the services rendered in the beneficiary's dental record:

Oral Evaluations:

D0140 Limited Oral Evaluation – Problem focused. An evaluation limited to a specific oral health problem or complaint. This may require interpretation of information acquired through additional diagnostic procedures. Report additional diagnostic procedures separately. Definitive procedures may be required on the same date as the evaluation; and

D0170 Re-evaluation – Limited, Problem focused (Established patient; Not post-operative visit). Assessing the status of a previously existing condition. A traumatic injury where no treatment was rendered but patient needs follow-up monitoring; evaluation for undiagnosed continuing pain; soft tissue lesion requiring follow-up evaluation.

Dental providers rendering services in a teledentistry environment will report the appropriate teledentistry code in addition to the oral health evaluation codes cited above. The CDT code for synchronous teledentistry is:

D9995 Teledentistry – synchronous; real-time encounter. (Reported in addition to other procedures (e.g., diagnostic) delivered to the patient on the date of service.)

NOTE: Currently, the D9995 code is *not covered by DC Medicaid*. However, the reporting of this CDT code will allow the documentation of the methods rendered to evaluate the beneficiary when the dentist and beneficiary are not in the same physical location. The D9995 code will be reimbursed at \$0 for reporting purposes.

² [Transmittal 20-08 Public Health Emergency Guidance on Medicaid-Reimbursable Telemedicine Services Allowance for Audio-Only Visits and HIPAA](#)

³ [Notification of Enforcement Discretion for Telehealth Remote Communications During the COVID-19 Nationwide Public Health Emergency.](#) Office of Civil Rights, March 30, 2020.

Contact

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Cc: DC Hospital Association
DC Primary Care Association
DC Health Care Association
DC Home Health Association
DC Behavioral Health Association
DC Coalition of Disability Service Providers
Medical Society of DC