



## A Message to our Providers:

US Family Health Plan ("USFHP") understands that our providers need flexibility in safely delivering prompt, quality care to their patients during these stressful and uncertain times. In order to support you, the USFHP will cover all telemedicine sessions during this national emergency and until such time as the President deems the emergency period to be over. Please note the following guidelines for sessions:

- In accordance with law, the treating provider must be licensed in both the state in which they, as well as their patient, are physically located, unless the State in which your practicing has applied for and received an exemption from this requirement
- Each provider must verify patient's identity and provide patient with his/her qualifications
- Arrangements for handling emergency situations should be determined at the outset of the session to ensure consistency with established procedures. In particular, you should follow professional practice guidelines and processes for hospitalizing patients, including those in need of mental health related hospitalizations
- Providers need to document the telemedicine sessions in the medical records, as they would for on-site patient visits (e.g. documentation of provider and patient location, diagnosis, etc.)
- Providers should provide patients with an alternative mode of communicating if there is a break down during the telemedicine session (e.g. provide patient with a telephone number to call)
- Providers should use best efforts to use a HIPAA compliant platform (e.g. Skype for Business, Zoom for Healthcare). Please note that applications such as Facebook Live, Tik Tok or similar video platforms are considered "public facing" and will not meet the requirements for a telemedicine session
- As the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) at the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has stated, they will not impose fines for non-HIPAA compliant platforms (e.g. FaceTime or WhatsApp) during the national COVID-19 pandemic, USFHP will reimburse sessions with these platforms if no other platform is available. Here is a link to the OCR Guidance: <https://www.hhs.gov/hipaa/for-professionals/special-topics/emergency-preparedness/notification-enforcement-discretion-telehealth/index.html>
- Please use your best professional judgment to practice telemedicine visits in private settings where patient health information is not shared with, or overheard by, other parties



- Telemedicine visits do not need to be related to COVID-19 to be reimbursed by our plan - any other medical condition will be honored (e.g. mental health, sprained ankle) during the COVID-19 crisis
- Per the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), as of March 16, 2020, DEA-registered practitioners may issue prescriptions for controlled substances pursuant to a telemedicine visit to patients for whom they have not conducted an in-person medical evaluation for as long as the HHS's designation of a public health emergency remains in effect, subject to compliance with practice standards and other applicable state and federal laws. Here is a link to the DEA Guidance:  
[https://deadiversion.usdoj.gov/coronavirus.html?inf\\_contact\\_key=e475ad72cf428bcacdb0e59dbb26b0eb680f8914173f9191b1c0223e68310bb1](https://deadiversion.usdoj.gov/coronavirus.html?inf_contact_key=e475ad72cf428bcacdb0e59dbb26b0eb680f8914173f9191b1c0223e68310bb1)
- Recommendations for billing: All office or other outpatient visits should be billed with CPT code(s) 99201-99215. Please note that telehealth services that are performed through a telecommunication device MUST have a GT modifier. This GT modifier is used, along with the CPT or HCPCS code (e.g. 99201 GT), to indicate telehealth services via interactive audio and video synchronous telecommunication systems. This GT modifier will designate the claim as a "distant site". The place of service must always be "02", as this code is specifically designated for telehealth services.
- Telephone evaluations with providers do not constitute as a telemedicine session and are typically not billable under the TRICARE program. However, given the critical environment in which providers are working, our plan has agreed to pay for providers' phone sessions with their patients when warranted due to the exigent circumstances, and until the emergency period is over. As such, please use the following codes for sessions which are audio-only: 99421-99423 and 99441-99443.

For any questions, please feel free to contact our Customer Service line at: 1-800-241-4848