

NCUIH Resource: COVID-19 and Telehealth for Urban Indian Organizations

Category: Covid-19

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COVID-19 & Telehealth at Urban Indian Organizations

Reimbursement for Telehealth Services has been expanded. Adopting telehealth may help treat an influx of COVID-19 patients while providing routine care to others.

Key Facts

- Medicare now allows reimbursement for Urban Facilities
- Virtual check-ins can use a broad range of devices and phones
- State Medicaid programs are expanding reimbursement
- Many private insurers have embraced the platform at parity to in-person services

General Resources & Start-Up Guides

- [CMS General Provider Telehealth and Telemedicine Tool Kit](#)
- [CMS Telehealth Services for Medicare FFS Providers](#)
- [CMS Telemedicine Toolkit for End Stage Renal Disease](#)
- COVID-19 Telehealth Toolkit, [with free support from the National Consortium of Telehealth Resource Centers](#)
- Updated Department of Justice [Guidance on telemedicine and the prescription of controlled substances](#)
- [Updates and Technical Assistance from the IHS TeleBehavioral Health Center of Excellence and their Step-by-Step Setup Guide](#)
- A [detailed list of state and federal policy updates](#) due to COVID-19, from the Center for Connected Health Policy (CCHP).
- The CCHP also provides a [detailed report](#) covering relevant state and federal laws, eligible services, and reimbursement policies, apart from these COVID-19 updates.

Summary of Updates

Medicare Fee-for-Service

Provide Telehealth Visits, Virtual Check-ins, and E-visits

- Medicare reimbursement is now allowed in urban areas
- All services allow patients to initiate encounters from their home
- Telehealth visits can be with new or established patients
- E-visits and brief “virtual check-ins” can be reimbursed:
 - for emails, calls, texts, and audio/video streaming
 - with established patients

- Eligible providers are:
 - Physicians
 - Nurse practitioners
 - Physician assistants
 - Nurse-midwives Clinical nurse specialists
 - Certified registered nurse anesthetists
 - Clinical psychologists (CP)
 - Registered dietitians or nutrition professional
- See the [CMS Fact Sheet for this 1135 waiver](#), [the list of eligible codes](#), [and FAQs](#).
- Medicare has [Waived licensing requirements](#) that health care professionals hold licenses in the state in which they provide services.*

Medicaid

- [State Waivers](#) have expanded opportunities for reimbursement
- Policies vary between states, but updates have been [collected](#) online.
- For a good guide for services in your state that were already reimbursable prior to COVID-19, see the [2019 CCHP Report](#).

Private Insurers

- Many payers have made announcements on telehealth during this pandemic, such as [Aetna](#), [Cigna](#), [and BlueShield BlueCross](#)