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