

Teledentistry: Navigating COVID-19

Emergency Response Telecommunication Guidance

In these unprecedented times of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic public health crisis, CareSource is committed to helping our Members, Provider networks and their teams stay protected. In order to mitigate the spread of infection and preserve critical Personal Protection Equipment (PPE), recommendations have been made to the dental community. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), other federal and state agencies as well as the American Dental Association (ADA) urged oral health providers only provide emergency or urgent oral health care to patients; no elective procedures until the public health emergency orders have been lifted. Care providers are encouraged to continue these practices until the public health crisis emergency orders have been lifted in their specific regions. Every provider and practice will have a unique set of circumstances to consider and will take varied approaches in transitioning back to full- time care. To better assess “**urgent and emergency**” needs, services requiring immediate care in the dental office and to help prevent overwhelming hospital emergency departments, patients may be best served when telecommunication technology can be leveraged. While teledentistry has several applications in a broader aspect and use, the following is guidance intended to help your practice navigate virtual communications and teledentistry during COVID-19 challenges.

Teledentistry Defined

Teledentistry [General Standards](#)

Telehealth refers to a broad variety of technologies and tactics to deliver virtual medical, health, and education services. Telehealth is not a specific service, but a collection of means to enhance care and education delivery. Teledentistry refers to the use of telehealth systems and methodologies in dentistry. Teledentistry can include patient care delivery using, but not limited to:

- **Live video (synchronous):** Live, two-way interaction between a person (patient, caregiver, or provider) and a provider using audiovisual (video conferencing) telecommunications technology.
- **Store-and-forward (asynchronous):** Transmission of recorded health information (for example, radiographs, photographs, video, digital impressions and photomicrographs of patients) through a secure electronic communications system to a practitioner, who uses the information to evaluate a patient’s condition or render a service outside of a real-time or live interaction.
- **Remote patient monitoring (RPM):** Personal health and medical data collection from an individual in one location via electronic communication technologies, which is transmitted to a provider (sometimes via a data processing service) in a different location for use in care and related support of care.
- **Mobile health (mHealth):** Health care and public health practice and education supported by mobile communication devices such as cell phones, tablet computers, and personal digital assistants (PDA).



Modification and Expansion for COVID- 19

Teledentistry in its typical application involves using a browser-based teledentistry solution or other HIPPA- compliant modality combined with an intraoral camera to allow dental or non-dental essential staff to send diagnostic imagery and patient details to remote care providers for evaluation. Typically involves transmitting information to the dental provider via intra - oral camera device utilized by a dental team member (such as dental hygienist, assistant or other health professional) via a (synchronous) or (asynchronous) secure platform means in a public health, school or other setting other than the dental office. The COVID -19 public health emergency has allowed for some expansion in technology and modifications in regulations and billing.

Telecommunications during the COVID-19 crisis primarily involves using secure live video to provide virtual consultations or more in-depth screenings. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) and Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) issued guidance regarding HIPAA and use of telecommunication technology during the COVID-19 public health emergency that empowers medical and dental providers to service patients wherever they are during this national and global public health emergency.

Before Implementing

Before implementing any form of telehealth, it is important to read and review applicable state and federal telehealth law and regulations. Review Georgia State Dental Practice Rules to determine what is permitted with teledentistry. If unclear, contact the State Dental Board office or Dental Association office. Additionally check with your **malpractice insurance carrier** to see if you are covered for any teledentistry or telehealth practice outside of the Good Faith Emergency Response Policies noted.

Resources:

- Georgia Board of Dentistry [Temporary Use of Telehealth Services](#)
- National Conference of State Legislatures and the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials [Teledentistry Laws](#)

Good Faith Federal Guidance HIPPA, CMS, DEA

OCR Guidance:

The HHS Office for Civil Rights (OCR) will exercise enforcement discretion and waive penalties for HIPAA violations against health care providers that serve patients in good faith through certain everyday communications technologies, such as FaceTime, Google Hangouts video or Skype, during the COVID-19 nationwide public health emergency. However, not those that are public facing such as Facebook Live, Twitch, and TikTok. This exercise of discretion applies to telehealth provided for any reason, regardless of whether the telehealth service is related to the diagnosis and treatment of health conditions related to COVID-19. [Full Guidance](#)

CMS Guidance:

Currently, CMS allows for use of telecommunications technology that have audio and video capabilities that are used for two-way, real-time interactive communication. For example, to the extent that many mobile computing devices have audio and video capabilities that may be used for two-way, real-time interactive communication they may qualify as acceptable technology. [Full guidance](#)

DEA Guidance:

In the wake of the public health emergency declared by federal authorities, per the US Department of Justice Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), healthcare professionals can now prescribe a controlled substance to a patient using telehealth technology. DEA-registered practitioners may issue prescriptions for controlled substances to patients for whom they have not conducted an in-person medical evaluation, provided all of the following conditions are met:

- The prescription is issued for a legitimate medical purpose by a practitioner acting in the usual course of his/her professional practice
- The telemedicine communication is conducted using an audio-visual, real-time, two-way interactive communication system.
- The practitioner is acting in accordance with applicable Federal and State law. [Guidance](#)

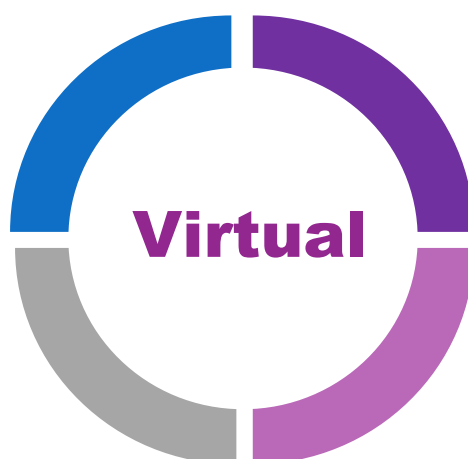
Please note: Audio Only communication cannot be used when prescribing a controlled substance; Live Video only

Telecommunication Devices & Platforms

Browser- Based Solutions

For Live video conferencing, a few teledentistry – **browser-based solutions** incorporate a HIPAA-secure electronic platform and dental patient record that supplements traditional in-office dental software. They can be combined with an intraoral camera to allow non-dental or essential staff in quarantined facilities to send diagnostic imagery and patient details to remote care providers for evaluation. Examples of two are:

- [Teledent](#) by MouthWatch (in response to COVID-19, we're offering a free 30-day license and waiving all setup fees)
- [Teledentix](#) by Virtual Dental Care
- [Zoom](#) for Healthcare



Audio-Visual Solutions

Audio or video communication technology such as the following non-public facing remote communication can additionally be used:

- **Using iPhone, Android, iPad, Laptop, Desktop and technology with audio/video capability systems**
- Real - Time Two- Way Communication using apps and vendors such as:
 - ✓ FaceTime
 - ✓ Skype
 - ✓ GoToMeeting
 - ✓ Cisco WebEx Meetings
 - ✓ Zoom

CareSource has not reviewed the [Business Associate Agreements \(BAA\)](#) offered by these vendors, and this list does not constitute an endorsement, certification, or recommendation of specific technology, software, browser- based solutions, applications, or products. There may be other HIPAA-compliant video communication products and technology vendors.

Telecommunication Virtual Evaluations

Implementation Procedure TIPS

- 1) **Live video (synchronous) Patient Facing Communication and;**
- 2) **Information stored and forwarded to dentist for subsequent review (asynchronous)**

As referenced in definitions, there are several applications of teledentistry for COVID- 19 challenges and beyond this crisis to address access to care as more states implement teledentistry laws. For the purposes of the COVID- 19 emergency response, this section references 1) Live video (synchronous) Patient Facing Communication and 2) Information stored and forwarded to dentist for subsequent review (asynchronous).

Two important points to note:

1. **LIVE video must be used for evaluation if controlled substances prescribed**
2. **Several commercial and government insurance payers will only reimburse for (synchronous) live video communication**

1) Live video (synchronous) Patient Facing Communication Performed by Dental Provider

- Prior to the Virtual Consult, have patient complete patient forms, informed consent, etc.
- Interview the patient by **video conference using one of platform or devices referenced.**
- Ensure that you are in a private non- public setting when conducting conference
- ✓ **Pre- Screen:**
- You can use live video to prescreen/interview patients to assess COVID symptoms and prioritize or defer treatment before traveling to office
- ✓ **Evaluate/Consult and triage**
- Prior to starting Virtual Exam, remind patients to wash their hands before and after and avoid touching surfaces after washing hands and after completing the exam
- Assess if Emergency or Urgent via **triage questions**
- Observe any visible signs extraoral and intraoral when possible (i.e. swelling, tooth fracture, etc.)
- ✓ **Provide oral health instruction, palliative care instructions**
- Provide prescriptions as indicated. Live- Video **Must be used for controlled substances**

2) Information stored and forwarded to dentist for subsequent review (asynchronous).

- All of the above information (extraoral/intraoral images, stored video, health/dental questionnaire, radiographs, temperature readings/COVID screening, etc.) obtained from either patient or other healthcare provider facility (i.e. urgent care or emergency department) are forwarded to dentist for evaluation. **Live Video must be used for Controlled substance prescriptions.**

If dental or non - dental personnel must evaluate a patient **in person** at a home or facility (i.e. shelter, Children's home, nursing home, hospital, etc.), or provide temporary palliative treatment (pending state dental practice Acts) they should conduct COVID screening questions first. Wear recommended personal protective equipment (PPE). Including a gown, gloves, eye protection, a disposable face shield that covers the front and sides of the face), and respiratory protection that is at least as protective as a NIOSH-approved N95 filtering facepiece respirator. Intraoral cameras and other devices should be sterile and protected.

Please visit [CareSource.com](https://www.caresource.com) for Up-to-date COVID Communications and Resources. For Questions Contact GADENTALINQUIRIES@CareSource.com

Dental Coding and Billing Guidance for Virtual Evaluations

The following is coding and billing guidance for **CareSource Georgia Market**. Georgia Medicaid and Marketplace Health Exchange Products
***Emergency Response Period (ERP)- Effective March 20, 2020, this billing policy is limited in time to the shorter of 120 days or the lifting of COVID-19 public health emergency orders.**

1. Place of Service Code

Important Note for Proper Claims Processing: On the ADA claim form you must enter the 2-digit Place of Service Code for Professional Claims, a HIPAA standard maintained by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid **Place of Service (02) Telehealth**

2. Teledentistry descriptor code required with the claim

These codes are required as **descriptor codes** in conjunction with any service codes (i.e. D0140 Limited Oral Evaluation)

D9995 teledentistry – synchronous; real-time encounter

Reported in addition to other procedures (e.g., diagnostic) delivered to the patient on the date of service.

D9996 teledentistry – asynchronous; information stored and forwarded to dentist for subsequent review

Reported in addition to other procedures (e.g., diagnostic) delivered to the patient on the date of service

For Georgia **Medicaid**, Reimbursement for D9995/D9996 will be applied per contracted Provider Agreement Rates; Limit One (D9995, D9996) per Member per Emergency Response Period*

For **Georgia Marketplace**, D9995/D9996 is **not reimbursed** and should be included on claim only as descriptor code

3. Codes Reimbursed for Virtual Evaluations

Plan	Code	Description	Limits/Frequencies	PA Required	Documents Required	Fee
GA Medicaid or GA Marketplace	D0140	limited oral evaluation – problem focused	One (D0140) virtual evaluation per Member per ERP*	No	Include with claim: Narrative, Evaluation Notes (include triage notes, telecommunication equipment used, time spent, any prescriptions provided, palliative instructions, if urgent, emergency care provided onsite, etc.)	Reimbursed at established contracted plan and product rates.
GA Marketplace Only	D0170	D0170 re-evaluation – limited, problem focused (established patient; not post-operative visit)	One (D0140, D0170) virtual evaluation per Member per ERP*	No		Reimbursed at established contracted plan and product rates.

- D0140 An evaluation limited to a specific oral health problem or complaint. This may require interpretation of information acquired through additional diagnostic procedures. Typically, patients receiving this type of evaluation present with a specific problem and/or dental emergencies, trauma, acute infections, etc.
- D0170 Assessing the status of a previously existing condition. For example: - 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
- Each teledentistry patient interaction should be thoroughly documented in the patient's record, which should include screen capture images or other diagnostic information pertaining to the patient's condition. This patient information should be entered and retained in the patient record as all services are subject to post review.
- Frequency limits will be modified such that these evaluations do not count towards a member's annual frequency limitations