



Telehealth

Expanding access to care

To support providers with caring for their CarePlus-covered patients while promoting both patient and provider safety, we are sharing this telehealth policy for the duration of the COVID-19 public health emergency (PHE). At a minimum, we will always follow the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) telehealth or [state-specific requirements](#) that apply to telehealth coverage for our insurance products. This policy will be reviewed periodically for changes based on the evolving COVID-19 public health emergency and updated CMS or state specific rules¹ based on executive orders. Please refer to the applicable CMS or state-specific regulations prior to any claim submissions, and check [CarePlus' COVID-19 Provider website](#) regularly for the latest information.

- **Temporary expansion of telehealth service scope and reimbursement rules**
 - To ease systemic burdens arising from COVID-19 and support shelter-in-place orders, CarePlus is encouraging the use of telehealth services to care for its members. Please refer to CMS, state, and plan coverage guidelines for additional information regarding services that can be delivered via telehealth.
 - As of 1/1/21, CarePlus benefits include no member cost share for in-network telehealth visits for primary care, urgent care and behavioral health. For specialty telehealth visits, please verify member plan benefits as any applicable member cost share would apply.
 - From 3/6/20 to 12/31/20, member cost-share was waived for telehealth visits with all participating/in-network providers.
- **Temporary expansion of telehealth channels**
 - CarePlus understands that not all telehealth visits will involve the use of both video and audio interactions. For providers or members who don't have access to secure video systems, we will temporarily accept telephone (audio-only) visits. These can be submitted and reimbursed as telehealth visits.
 - Please follow CMS or state-specific guidelines and bill as you would a standard telehealth visit.
 - Further information on using mobile devices for telehealth visits can be found below.

Please refer to [CarePlus' COVID-19 Telehealth and Other Virtual Services policy](#), for further information.

With respect to these telehealth changes, note that all other coverage rules will continue to apply, and refer to applicable CarePlus policies for additional information.

Expanded telehealth technologies through mobile devices

During the COVID-19 public health emergency, [the new waiver in Section 1135\(b\)](#) of the Social Security Act (found on the CMS Telemedicine Fact Sheet) authorizes use of telephones that have audio and video capabilities to provide Medicare telehealth services.

Additionally, the Health & Human Services Office for Civil Rights (HHS OCR) will exercise enforcement discretion and waive penalties for Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) violations against healthcare providers that serve patients in good faith through everyday communications technologies, such as FaceTime or Skype. Read more about [guidance and application options for telehealth services](#) here.

¹CarePlus is not affiliated with the Center for Connected Health Policy. This link is provided as a resource for your convenience. CarePlus has not independently verified the information contained on this website

For more information on COVID-19 and the expanded access to telehealth services:

CMS

- [CMS Telehealth Services Fact Sheet](#)
- [Medicare Telemedicine Health Care Provider Fact Sheet](#)
- [CMS Current Emergencies site](#)

AMA

- [AMA's COVID-19 Resource Center for Physicians](#)
- [AMA STEPS Forward Module on Telemedicine](#)

Additional

- [CCHPCA Summary of Covid-19-Related State Actions](#)
- [Options for telehealth services and updated regulations from HSS OCR](#)

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