

Telehealth and Telemedicine Services

The use of telehealth and telemedicine increases appointment availability, enhances follow-up care after emergency department visits or hospitalizations, and helps to close gaps in patient care.



Telehealth, sometimes referred to as telemedicine, is the use of electronic information and telecommunications technologies to extend care when you and the patient are not in the same place at the same time. Technologies for telehealth include videoconferencing, store-and-forward imaging, streaming media, and terrestrial and wireless communications. Telehealth services may have varying billing and reimbursement policies, depending on the payer/insurer and geographic location. For more information, please visit the **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) website** and **Telehealth.HHS.gov**.

Categories of telehealth:

Synchronous care

Synchronous care is a live interaction between a provider and a patient. Visits may also include a caregiver, as appropriate. Examples include:

- Video calls between a patient and a health care provider.
- Audio-only calls when a video visit is not an option.

Asynchronous telehealth

Asynchronous telehealth, also called store and forward, is communication or information shared between providers, patients, and caregivers that occur at different points in time. Examples include:

- Text messaging or email with follow-up instructions or confirmations.
- Images or pathology reports sent for specialty review and evaluation.
- Lab results or vital statistics.

Mobile Health and Remote Patient Monitoring (RPM)

- **Mobile Health** – the use of digital devices such as smartphones or wearable technology to support patient health.
- **RPM** – The transmission of patient data and clinical information to the provider either through in-home devices or electronically entered and transmitted by the patient.

Telehealth by payer:

Medicare

Permanent Medicare changes

- **Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs)** and **Rural Health Clinics (RHCs)** can serve as a distant site provider for behavioral/mental telehealth services.
- Medicare patients can receive telehealth services for behavioral/mental health care from their home.
- There are no geographic restrictions for the originating site for behavioral/mental telehealth services.
- Behavioral/mental telehealth services can be delivered using audio-only technology communication platforms.
- Rural Emergency Hospitals (REHs) are eligible originating sites for telehealth.
- Sentara Health Plans will cover what is in the current fee schedule located on the CMS **website**.

Medicaid

Sentara Health Plans will cover services delivered via telehealth when all conditions under the **Reimbursable Telehealth Services** section are met, as outlined by the Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS).

Commercial

Sentara Health Plans' commercial members' coverage is determined by the specific product, group, and plan. For more details, please contact provider services at **1-800-229-8822**.