

Please Note: This article has been revised - refer to the updated article dated 4/1/2020.

Telemedicine and Telehealth Coverage Expansion in Response to COVID-19

In response to the coronavirus (COVID-19), Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX) is temporarily expanding coverage for medical and behavioral health telemedicine and telehealth visits. For insured plans regulated by the State of Texas – identified by a “TDI” or “DOI” printed on the member identification card – BCBSTX will cover telemedicine medical services and telehealth services in accordance with the temporary emergency rules adopted by the Texas Department of Insurance March 17, 2020.

We are continuing to evaluate the evolving state and federal legislative and regulatory landscape relating to COVID-19 and will continue to update our practices accordingly.

Expansion of telemedicine/telehealth coverage:

With the temporary enhancements to existing in-network telemedicine/telehealth benefits, the coverages below will apply for state-regulated, fully-insured members who receive covered telemedicine/telehealth services. This applies to claims with dates of service beginning March 10, 2020.

- Telemedicine/telehealth visits covered as a regular office visit for providers who offer the service through 2-way live interactive telephone or digital video consultations. Please note that on a temporary basis in response to COVID-19, audio-only consultations will be covered when provided in accordance with applicable regulations and rules.
- Continued access to [MDLive](#) or a similar telemedicine/telehealth vendor, with a network of physicians who provide telemedicine/telehealth services.
- No member cost-sharing for covered, medically necessary medical and behavioral health services delivered via telemedicine or telehealth by a qualified in-network provider.
- BCBSTX will reimburse in-network professionals at least the same rate for a telemedicine/telehealth service as it reimburses for the same service when provided in-person, including covered mental health services.

Benefits may be different for our members covered under certain employer-funded health plans depending on the decisions their employer makes about telemedicine and telehealth services.

Resources:

For more information refer to our [Telemedicine and Telehealth Services](#) page.

Telemedicine and Telehealth Coverage Expansion in Response to COVID-19 (cont.)

The following telemedicine/telehealth codes are accepted by BCBSTX for use by physicians and other health care providers including behavioral health therapy services:

Code	Description
90791*	Psych diagnostic evaluation
90792*	Psych diagnostic evaluation w/medical services
90832*	Psychotherapy 30 min
90833*	Psychotherapy 30 min w/e&m evaluation
90834*	Psychotherapy 45min
90836*	Psychotherapy 45 min w/e&m evaluation
90837*	Psychotherapy 60min
90838*	Psychotherapy 60 min w/e&m evaluation
90847*	Family psychotherapy
98966	Nonphysician telephone assessment 5-10 min
98967	Nonphysician telephone assessment 11-20 min
98968	Nonphysician telephone assessment 21-30 min
98970	QNHP online digital E/M SVC EST PT <7 D 5-10 min
98971	QNHP online digital E/M SVC EST PT <7 D 11-20 min
98972	QNHP online digital E/M SVC EST PT <7 D 21+ min
99201*	Office visit new patient
99202*	Office visit new patient
99203*	Office visit new patient
99204*	Office visit new patient
99205*	Office visit new patient
99213*	Office visit established patient 15 min
99214*	Office visit established patient 25 min
99215*	Office visit established patient 40 min
99421	Physician /Qualified Health Professional telephone evaluation 5-10 min
99422	Physician /Qualified Health Professional telephone evaluation 11-20 min
99423	Physician/Qualified Health Professional telephone evaluation 21-30 min
99441	Physician/Qualified Health Professional online digital evaluation 5-10 min
99442	Physician/Qualified Health Professional online digital evaluation 11-20 min
99443	Physician/Qualified Health Professional online digital evaluation 21-30 min

***Providers submitting claims for telemedicine/telehealth services using these codes must append with modifier 95.**

Note: This list is **not** inclusive of all telemedicine/telehealth codes. Other services may be eligible for telemedicine/telehealth reimbursement when billed with the appropriate CPT®/HCPCS codes and any applicable modifiers.

Telemedicine and Telehealth Coverage Expansion in Response to COVID-19 (cont.)

Because this is a rapidly evolving situation, you should continue to use the Centers for Disease Control Guidance (CDC) on COVID-19, as the CDC has the most up-to-date information and recommendations. Additionally, watch for updates on [BCBSTX News and Updates](#) and our [COVID-19 Preparedness](#) pages.


If you have any questions or if you need additional information, please contact your local [BCBSTX Network Management Office Location](#).

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As a reminder, it is important to check eligibility and benefits before rendering services. This step will help you determine if benefit prior authorization is required for a member. For additional information, such as definitions and links to helpful resources, refer to the Eligibility and Benefits section on BCBSTX's provider website.

Please note that checking eligibility and benefits, and/or the fact that a service or treatment has been prior authorized or predetermined for benefits is not a guarantee of payment. Benefits will be determined once a claim is received and will be based upon, among other things, the member's eligibility and the terms of the member's certificate of coverage applicable on the date services were rendered. If you have questions, contact the number on the member's ID card.

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