



May 6, 2020

Re: Telehealth Preventive Wellness Visits During COVID-19 Crisis

Dear Provider:

What we are experiencing due to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic is unlike anything we have seen in our lifetime. Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana continues to review our telehealth policies to better meet the needs of our providers and members during this unprecedented time.

Effective for dates of service on and after March 16, 2020, Blue Cross is further expanding our policies to allow credentialed network providers to deliver preventive wellness services for all age groups as telehealth visits. The expanded telehealth guidelines outlined in this letter will be in effect until we are past this crisis.

We will continue to review our telehealth guidelines and update providers as new developments occur. Blue Cross will notify providers when the expanded telehealth policies are no longer effective.

Blue Cross Preventive Wellness Telehealth Policies

During the COVID-19 crisis, credentialed network providers can deliver telehealth services through audio/video visits or by phone-only as a replacement for office visits. **Telehealth encounters for preventive wellness are encouraged to be delivered as audio/video visits.**

- Provider must adhere to the telehealth guidelines in the provider manual and agree to Blue Cross' allowable charges.
- Services must be provided using a non-public-facing platform for telehealth services that is either HIPAA-compliant or approved by the Health and Human Services Office of Civil Rights.
- Telehealth encounters must be fully documented in the patient's medical record.
- There are many components to the wellness exam that are not possible through a telehealth encounter. Providers are asked to close all care gaps when the patient can be seen through a face-to-face encounter later in the year. Examples include:
 - Blood pressure measurement
 - Retinal exam in a diabetic patient
 - Providing immunizations
 - Critical exam components for children under two years and mapping growth chart progress
 - Labs and other tests typically done during a preventive health exam

-over-

- Telehealth claims for preventive wellness visits should include the place of service code typically used by the provider (e.g., 11), along with Modifier GT or 95.
- As a reminder, effective April 15, 2020, individual members who buy their own healthcare coverage and those who are covered through fully insured groups have \$0 telehealth audio/video or phone-only visits. Self-insured employer groups have the option to waive their members' out-of-pocket costs. Visit the iLinkBlue (www.BCBSLA.com/ilinkblue) message board for the list of self-insured employer groups that are **not** waiving the member cost share.

Evaluation and Management (E&M) Services

- Providers operating within the scope of their license to deliver preventive wellness E&M services are allowed to bill these services as telehealth visits.
- For new patient visits, CPT® codes 99381-99387 are allowed for telehealth. For established patient visits, CPT and HCPCS codes 99391-99397 are allowed for telehealth.

Claims already received and processed by Blue Cross that meet the criteria outlined above will be adjusted appropriately without the provider needing to refile the claim.

Thank you for working with us to serve our members, especially during this time of uncertainty. Please continue to communicate with Blue Cross as your needs change to meet the COVID-19 crisis. We value you as a key part of our provider networks and the services you bring to our members—your patients.

More Online

Be sure to visit our COVID-19 Provider Resources page, where you can access all of our latest provider communications. Go to www.BCBSLA.com/providers, then click on the "COVID-19 Provider Resources" link at the top of the page. We will continue to add updated information to this page as it develops.

Contact Us

If you have any questions about the billing of COVID-19, you may send an email to our Provider Relations Department at provider.relations@bcbsla.com. Please put "COVID-19 Billing" in the subject line.

Sincerely,



Hiral Arges
VP, Provider Relations and Contracting
Network Administration

HA/jrm