

Telehealth Indicator on Medicare Care Compare Doctors and Clinicians Public Reporting

January 2023

Overview

In January 2023, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) implemented a telehealth indicator on [Medicare Care Compare](#) and in the [Provider Data Catalog \(PDC\)](#) to expand the information available to patients and caregivers when choosing doctors or clinicians ([87 FR 70109 – 70111](#)). In response to the ongoing COVID-19 public health emergency (PHE), CMS expanded Medicare payment for telemedicine services to improve patients' access to care. A September 2021 Medicare Telemedicine Snapshot¹ showed a 30-fold increase in telehealth services, with more than half of Medicare beneficiaries using these services between March 1, 2020 and February 28, 2021. With the growth in patients seeking telehealth due to the ongoing PHE, and CMS finalizing and expanding coverage of certain telehealth services, adding an indicator to clinician profile pages clarifies for website users which clinicians offer telehealth services.

Informing Beneficiaries about Telehealth Services

Care Compare provides information to help Medicare beneficiaries make informed decisions about their healthcare. CMS research shows that historically, website users search for information about telehealth. Additionally, user testing indicates that users understand the meaning of a telehealth indicator, and some also want to know the specific telehealth services clinicians offer. Most users found the telehealth indicator to be important and useful when selecting a clinician. Telehealth is also one of beneficiaries' primary service requests the Medicare Call Center receives monthly.

Publicly reporting a telehealth indicator on clinician profile pages also furthers CMS's health equity goals. According to the Medicare Telemedicine Snapshot, more than half of the Medicare population in almost every racial/ethnic group regardless of gender or Medicare and Medicaid status are utilizing telehealth services. Given the exponential increase in Medicare telehealth usage by Medicare users over the past two years, particularly by those in areas with limited healthcare access, and those who cannot physically access a clinician's office, publicly reporting information on which clinicians furnish services via telehealth would aid in health care provider selection across the Medicare and dually eligible Medicare and Medicaid populations, since some beneficiaries have preferences for, or limitations preventing them from, seeing a clinician in person.

¹ CMS, Medicare Telemedicine Snapshot: March 2020–Feb. 2021 (2021), <https://www.cms.gov/files/document/medicare-telemedicine-snapshot.pdf>. See also Medicare Telemedicine Snapshot Data File, <https://www.cms.gov/files/zip/medicare-telemedicine-snapshot-data-file.zip>.

Example of Telehealth Indicator on Clinician Profile Page

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Orthopedic surgery

Zella A. Brillbrey

Charges the Medicare-approved amount (so you pay less out-of-pocket)

✓ Telehealth services

GROUP AFFILIATIONS
[Johns Hopkins University](#)

LOCATION
1860 Town Ctr Dr
Suite 250
Herndon VA, 20170
[+ 1 more location](#)

PHONE NUMBER
(205) 555-5515

[Save to Favorites](#)

Details Affiliations Quality Locations

DETAILS

Specialties
[Orthopedic surgery](#)
[Family medicine](#)

Sex
Female

Education & training
Johns Hopkins University
School of Medicine, 1985

Innovative model participation
✓ Yes
[Medicare Shared Savings Program](#)

Board certifications
[Sports medicine](#)
[Family medicine](#)

Electronic Health Record technology participation
✓ This clinician is a successful performer in the Electronic Health Record Technology performance category.

Publicly Reporting Clinician Telehealth Services

To develop the telehealth indicator for display on Care Compare clinician profile pages, CMS identified clinicians who perform telehealth services using Point of Service Code (POS) Code 02 and POS Code 10 that indicates telehealth on paid physician and ancillary service, i.e., carrier, claims, or modifier 95 appended on paid claims. To keep the indicator current and address concerns that some telehealth codes are time-limited, CMS will use a 6-month lookback period and a refresh of the telehealth indicator on clinician profile pages bi-monthly, as technically feasible, which is the same cadence in which CMS updates other clinician directory information. Frequently updating the telehealth indicator information would ensure that when a time-limited Category 3 code expires, a clinician who only bills telehealth services under that code would no longer have a telehealth indicator on their profile page.

CMS finalized publicly reporting the telehealth indicator on clinician profile pages only. While CMS recognizes that publishing telehealth indicators on both clinician and group profile pages may be helpful to consumers, it is not operationally feasible at this time to publish telehealth indicators on group profile pages with accuracy, given clinician turnover at group practices and resulting data implications. Including the telehealth indicator on clinician profile pages only will provide the most accurate and current information for consumers.

Telehealth Indicator on Medicare Care Compare Fact Sheet

The indicator on clinician profile pages is accompanied by a statement for users that the clinician only provides some, not all, services via telehealth. CMS also modified the PDC to indicate if a clinician offers telehealth services.

Get in Touch

If you have any questions about public reporting for doctors and clinicians on Care Compare, contact the QPP Service Center at 1-866-288-8292 (Monday-Friday 8 a.m. - 8 p.m. ET) or by e-mail at QPP@cms.hhs.gov.

To receive assistance more quickly, consider calling during non-peak hours (before 10 a.m. and after 2 p.m. ET).

- Customers who are hard of hearing can dial 711 to be connected to a TRS Communications Assistant.