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SPECIAL EDITION

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News

CMS Releases Telehealth Toolkits for General Practitioners and End-Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) Providers

Medicare FFS Response to the Public Health Emergency on the Coronavirus (COVID-19) — Revised COVID-19 Elective Surgeries and Non-Essential Procedures Recommendations

News

CMS Releases Telehealth Toolkits for General Practitioners and End-Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) Providers

On March 18, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) released two comprehensive toolkits on telehealth that are specific to general practitioners as well as providers treating patients with End-Stage Renal Disease (ESRD).

Under President Trump's leadership to respond to the need to limit the spread of COVID-19, CMS has broadened access to Medicare telehealth services so that beneficiaries can receive a wider range of services from their doctors without having to travel to a healthcare facility. CMS is expanding this benefit on a temporary and emergency basis under the 1135 waiver authority and Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act. Under this new waiver, Medicare can pay for office, hospital, and other visits furnished via telehealth across the country and including in patient's places of residence starting March 6, 2020. A range of providers, such as doctors, nurse practitioners, clinical psychologists, and licensed clinical social workers, will be able to offer telehealth to their patients. These benefits are part of the broader effort by CMS and the White House Task Force to ensure that all Americans – particularly those at high-risk of complications from the virus that causes the disease COVID-19 are aware of easy-to-use, accessible benefits that can help keep them healthy while helping to contain the community spread of this virus.

Each toolkit contains electronic links to reliable sources of information on telehealth and telemedicine, which will reduce the amount of time providers spend searching for answers and increase their time with patients. Many of these links will help providers learn about the general concept of telehealth, choose telemedicine vendors, initiate a telemedicine program, monitor patients remotely, and develop documentation tools. Additionally, the information contained within each toolkit will also outline temporary virtual services that could be used to treat patients during this specific period of time.

You can find the Telehealth Toolkit for General Practitioners here:

<https://www.cms.gov/files/document/general-telemedicine-toolkit.pdf>

You can find the End-Stage Renal Disease Providers Toolkit here: <https://www.cms.gov/files/document/esrd-provider-telehealth-telemedicine-toolkit.pdf>

CMS continues to monitor the developing COVID-19 situation and assess options to bring relief to clinicians. To keep up with the important work the Task Force is doing in response to COVID-19 visit the [coronavirus.gov webpage](#). For complete and updated information specific to CMS, please visit the [Current Emergencies Website](#).

Medicare FFS Response to the Public Health Emergency on the Coronavirus (COVID-19) — Revised

The MLN Matters Special Edition Article SE20011 on [Medicare Fee-for-Service \(FFS\) Response to the Public Health Emergency on the Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) \(PDF\)](#) was updated to cover the use of modifiers on telehealth claims and to explain that the DR condition code is not needed on telehealth claims under the waiver.

COVID-19 Elective Surgeries and Non-Essential Procedures Recommendations

On March 18, at the White House Task Force Press Briefing, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) announced that all elective surgeries, non-essential medical, surgical, and dental procedures be delayed during the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

You can find a copy of the press release here: <https://www.cms.gov/newsroom/press-releases/cms-recommendations-adult-elective-surgeries-non-essential-medical-surgical-and-dental>

You can find a copy of the guidance here: <https://www.cms.gov/files/document/31820-cms-adult-elective-surgery-and-procedures-recommendations.pdf>

These recommendations, and earlier CMS guidance and actions in response to the COVID-19 virus, are part of the ongoing White House Task Force efforts. To keep up with the important work the Task Force is doing in response to COVID-19, visit the [coronavirus.gov webpage](#) for further information. For a complete and updated list of CMS actions, and other information specific to CMS, please visit the [Current Emergencies Website](#).

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