Coronavirus: Telehealth Coverage Guidelines

Updated March 24, 2020

As we continue to monitor the outbreak of the coronavirus (COVID-19) in Alabama, we are expanding coverage for telehealth to ease access to appropriate medical services for your patients who are Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama members.

What does the expansion include?

The expansion of telehealth services is effective March 1, 2020, and will expire April 16, 2020. It will be reevaluated for a continuance as needed.

This expansion applies for patients who wish to receive their care remotely and limit their exposure. It can also serve as an initial screening for patients who may need to be tested for the coronavirus. For guidance on coronavirus testing, please refer to the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention and the Alabama Department of Public Health websites.

Member cost-sharing (copayment, deductible, co-insurance) will be waived for all identified telehealth services, regardless of whether there is a diagnosis related to COVID-19. Always check eligibility and benefits through ProviderAccess or your practice management system to confirm cost-sharing details.

Note: CMS is also allowing the expansion of telehealth services to include Annual Wellness Visits for Blue Advantage patients.

Note: For information about prescribing controlled substances via telehealth, see the joint statement on the Alabama State Board of Medical Examiners website and the additional statement from the Alabama Board of Pharmacy.

What types of providers can perform telehealth?

Refer to our Telehealth Billing Guide for eligible providers for each service type.

Behavioral health providers are included in this policy expansion. For behavioral health billing and coding guidelines specific to this telehealth expansion, refer to the New Directions Behavioral Health telehealth expansion memo.

If you have patients who are experiencing distress or anxiety, New Directions is offering a crisis hotline for the public at 1-833-848-1764.

Where do I look for more information about coding and billing for telehealth services?

For the most up-to-date information, refer to our Telehealth Billing Guide. At this time, only the codes listed in the Telehealth Billing Guide should be submitted for these expanded telehealth services.

If you have questions, call Provider Networks at 1-866-904-4130.

New Directions Behavioral Health is our business associate and is an independent company that provides diagnostic testing, information and services.