

ARKANSAS BCBS, HEALTH ADVANTAGE, & USABLE CORP TERMS AND CONDITIONS FOR RECOGNITION OF TELMEDICINE PROVIDERS

Telemedicine is the use of telecommunication for the delivery of healthcare when distance separates the provider and the patient. Telemedicine has been advocated as a means to provide healthcare to underserved areas and to facilitate timely consultation in urgent situations. Telemedicine includes consultation, diagnostic, monitoring, and therapeutic services delivered via a two-way, synchronous, HIPAA compliant audio and video telecommunication system. A telemedicine visit involves an exchange between a patient and a provider at geographically different locations.

I. Definitions:

- a. **Synchronous:** A term used to describe interactive video connections, indicating that the transmission of information in both directions is occurring at the same time (synchronously).
 - b. **Asynchronous:** A term used to describe store and forward transmission of medical images or information, because the transmission typically occurs in one direction at a time. An example would be sending a photograph to a specialist, who will subsequently provide an interpretation to the sender
 - c. **Distant Site:** Also called the “Hub” or “Consultant” site. The Distant Site is defined as the site where the provider/specialist is physically located during an encounter with a patient who is at the Originating Site.
 - d. **Originating Site:** Also call the “Spoke” or “Patient” site. The Originating Site is defined as the location of the patient during the telehealth encounter or consult.
 - e. **Presenter:** Telemedicine encounters require the Originating Site provider to perform an exam of a patient from many miles away. In order to accomplish that task, an individual trained in the use of the equipment must be available at the Originating Site of a medical visit to “present” the patient, manage the cameras, and perform any “hands-on” activities as necessary to successfully complete the exam.
- II. The Originating Site is the office or hospital facility where the patient is located. The Originating Site must have a Presenter and adequate medical personnel in attendance to facilitate a high-quality interaction, including both the telecommunication and clinical aspects of the telemedicine visit. For psychiatric or psychological telemedicine visits, medical personnel may be unnecessary at the Originating Site.
- III. The Distant Site provider must be licensed as required by the appropriate state’s Medical Board. The Distant Site provider must be an allopathic or osteopathic physician, except in the case of psychological counseling, in which case the provider must be a licensed clinical social worker, licensed psychologist, or licensed allopathic or osteopathic physician.

IV. Coding Guidelines:

- a. The provider at the Distant Site must submit claims for telemedicine services using the appropriate CPT or HCPCS code for the professional service delivered, along with the telemedicine modifier GT, “via interactive audio and video telecommunications systems.” The –GT modifier should appear in modifier field 1. The Originating Site must submit claims for the facility for telemedicine services using HCPCS code Q3014, “Telehealth Originating Site facility fee.” The Q3014 must be submitted for the same date of service as the professional code, and it must indicate the physical location of the facility where the member was at the time of the telemedicine encounter. In the case of a member with end-stage renal disease and place of service Home, code Q3014 does not apply and should not be submitted.
- b. The claim for Q3014 should name a provider who is responsible for care of the member at the Originating Site rather than the name of a facility (except in the case of hospital facility claims). However, this provider is not required to be present in the Originating Site at the time of the visit. For telemedicine visits where the Originating Site is in the hospital setting, the claim may be submitted as an outpatient hospital claim. All other Originating Sites must file claims for Q3014 using the HCFA1500 claim form. For inpatient services, Q3014 is not separately reimbursable.

V. Policy/Coverage:

Telemedicine is covered when all of the following conditions are met:

- a. The service is one which is allowed when done in a face-to-face setting, and can be safely and effectively performed via telemedicine.
- b. A Presenter is available at the Originating Site to orient the patient, operate the equipment, problem solve, and gather data. This is not required if the member has end-stage renal disease and the Originating Site is the home.
- c. The member is physically present during the visit in a hospital facility or provider’s office. This requirement does not apply to members with end-stage renal disease, who may be in their home at the time of a telemedicine visit.
- d. The telemedicine provider has a professional relationship with the member. A professional relationship exists if:
 - i. The provider has previously established a face-to-face professional relationship with the member (or)
 - ii. The member has been referred to the telemedicine provider (or provider group) by a provider who has an on-going professional relationship with the member (and)
 - iii. The provider (or provider’s group) is able to provide appropriate follow-up care when necessary.
- e. The encounter is by real-time audio visual communication. (Store-and-forward, audio-only, email, fax, and telemonitoring are not reimbursable.)
- f. A clinical record of the encounter which contains at least the same elements as are included in a face-to-face encounter record is maintained; the location of the Originating Site and Distant Site, along with the date and time of the connection must be recorded in the note.
- g. For visits which include a physical exam, the equipment allows for remote examination by the provider (eg stethoscope, otoscope, etc giving a diagnostic-quality signal to the provider) OR a qualified, licensed person capable of performing the exam supplements the examination and relays the findings to the provider.
- h. Data transmission must be accomplished using a HIPAA-compliant network, with sufficient bandwidth and screen resolution to permit adequate interaction with the patient and assessment of behavioral and

physical features. The network must maintain a log of connections, with time, date, and duration. An example of a compliant network is Arkansas e-Link.

- i. The provider at the Distant Site and the provider or facility at the Originating Site have attested to meeting the requirements for recognition as telemedicine providers by Arkansas Blue Cross Blue Shield. These requirements will apply regardless of the network participation status of the individual providers involved in the delivery of telemedicine services. *(This may or may not become a requirement.)*

The following services are not covered:

- a. eICU monitoring as an adjunct to intensive care unit services
- b. Services which are, by definition, hands-on, such as surgery, interventional radiology, coronary angiography, anesthesia, and endoscopy.
- c. Telephonic, fax, email, store-and-forward services
- d. Any other telehealth or telemedicine services not meeting the above criteria

Attestation:

I _____ (print name), making application as the duly authorized representative of _____ (Originating Site or Distant Site name), warrant and represent that I am an officer of the Originating Site or Distant Site identified herein, having full power and authority to execute this document on its behalf, and to bind the Originating Site or Distant Site to the commitments, representations and warranties herein expressed. Both I and the Originating Site or Distant Site identified herein warrant and represent to each network-sponsoring organization (Arkansas Blue Cross and Blue Shield, USABLE Corporation, and HMO Partners, Inc. d/b/a Health Advantage, and any subsidiary or affiliate company of each) to which application for recognition is being made that the Originating Site or Distant Site meets all the requirements and fulfills all terms and conditions as outlined above in sections I-V. In the event the Originating Site or Distant Site fails to maintain ongoing compliance with any of the requirements and/or terms and conditions outlined above, the Originating Site or Distant Site representative will provide immediate notification in writing to each network-sponsoring organization.

(Authorized Representative Signature)

(Date)