



Telemedicine and Direct Patient Contact	
Policy Type:	Revised
Applies to:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Medical Products (including Commercial & Medicare) All participating and nonparticipating physicians, facilities, and other qualified health care professionals
Policy Implementation:	Date of Service
Policy Revision Date:	Click Here
Last Review:	December, 2019
Next Review:	December, 2020

Our payment policies ensure that we pay providers based on the code that most accurately describes the procedure performed. We include CPT/HCPCS, CMS or other coding methodologies in our payment policies when appropriate. Unless noted otherwise, payment policies apply to all professionals who deliver health care services. When developing payment policies, we consider coding methodology, industry-standard payment logic, regulatory requirements, benefits design and other factors.

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Overview

This policy addresses our guidelines regarding payment for telehealth, telemedicine, direct patient contact, care plan oversight, concierge medicine, and missed appointments.

Refer to [Expanded Claim Edits](#) for additional coding and reimbursement policies that may apply separately from the policy detailed below.

Definitions/Glossary

Term	Definition
Asynchronous Telecommunication	Telecommunication systems that store medical information such as diagnostic images or video and forward it from one site to another for the physician or health care practitioner to view in the future at a site different from the patient. This is a non-interactive telecommunication because the physician or health care practitioner views the medical information without the patient being present.
Synchronous Interactive Audio and Video Telecommunication, Interactive Audio and Visual Transmissions and Audio-Visual Communication Technology	Real-time interactive video teleconferencing that involves communication between the patient and a distant physician or health care practitioner who is performing the medical service. The physician or health care practitioner sees the patient throughout the communication, so that two-way communication (sight and sound) can take place.



Telehealth	Telehealth is broader than telemedicine and takes in all health care services that are provided via live, interactive audio and visual transmissions of a physician-patient encounter. These health care services include non-clinical services, such as provider training, administrative meetings and continuing medical education; in addition to clinical services. Telehealth may be provided via real-time telecommunications or transmitted by store-and-forward technology.
Telemedicine	Telemedicine services involve the delivery of clinical medicine via real-time telecommunications such as telephone, the internet, or other communications networks or devices that do not involve in person direct patient contact.

Payment Guidelines

- [Telemedicine for Commercial Plans](#)
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Telemedicine for Commercial Plans	
Two-way, Synchronous (i.e. real-time) Audiovisual Interactive Medical Service Modifiers GT, 95	<p>We pay for two-way, synchronous (i.e. real-time) audiovisual interactive medical services between the patient and the provider.</p> <p>We consider services recognized by The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and appended with modifier GT, as well as services recognized by the AMA included in Appendix P of the CPT® Codebook and appended with modifier 95.</p> <p>A list of eligible CPT/HCPCS codes is available here. When a provider reports modifier GT or 95, it certifies the patient received services via an audiovisual telecommunications system.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• GT: Telehealth service rendered via interactive audio and video telecommunications system• 95: Synchronous telemedicine service rendered via real-time interactive audio and video telecommunications system <p>Click here for more information about our telemedicine visit co-pay liberalization in response to the Coronavirus COVID-19 outbreak.</p>



Asynchronous Telecommunication Modifier GQ	<p>We don't pay for asynchronous telemedicine services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• These services are considered incidental to the overall episode of care for the member.• When providers report modifier GQ it certifies the patient received services via an asynchronous method. <p>Click here for more information about our telemedicine visit co-pay liberalization in response to the Coronavirus COVID-19 outbreak.</p>
Tele-Stroke Services Modifier G0	<p>We pay for tele-stroke services when appended with modifier G0.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• G0: Telehealth services for diagnosis, evaluation, or treatment, of symptoms of an acute stroke

Telemedicine for Medicare Advantage Plans

Telemedicine for Medicare Members/Plans	<p>Medicare Advantage members may be eligible for telemedicine services in accordance with CMS regulations. We follow CMS policy.</p> <p>www.cms.gov</p>
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Direct Patient Contact

Direct Patient Contact	<p>Other than two-way synchronous (i.e. real time) audio visual interactive medical services, and tele-stroke services, as above, we don't pay for medical services that don't include direct in-person patient contact. Payment for these services is considered incidental to the overall episode of care for the member. One example of time spent without direct patient contact is physician standby services.</p> <p>We consider services payable only when provided in-person face-to-face.</p>
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Telehealth Transmission Fees

Telehealth Transmission Fees HCPCs codes Q3014 and T1014	<p>Charges for telehealth services or transmission fees aren't eligible for payment. These services are incidental to the charges associated with the evaluation and management of the patient.</p>
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Care Plan Oversight

Care Plan Oversight	<p>Care plan oversight is not eligible for payment. Care plan oversight is billed for physician supervision of patients under the care of home health agencies, hospice or nursing facilities. It includes the time spent</p>
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reviewing reports on patient status and care conferences. We do not pay for time without direct patient contact.

Note: Care plan oversight is eligible for payment on case management exceptions authorized by Patient Management.

Concierge Medicine or Boutique Medicine

Concierge Medicine or Boutique Medicine Concierge medicine, also called boutique medicine is a fee charged for services a patient receives outside of direct patient contact. These services are considered above and beyond the usual, such as scheduling preference or return phone calls from the provider.

These services do not represent treatment of disease or injury. They are standard administrative services that are included in the evaluation & management service, we don't allow separate payment.

No specific code exists for these services. Services may be billed with a written description, such as "Concierge Services" or "Administrative Services."

Missed Appointments

Missed Appointments We don't cover missed appointments because no direct or indirect medical care was rendered to the patient. Charges due to a missed appointment are the responsibility of the member.

List of Eligible CPT/HCPCS for two-way, synchronous

Eligible Code Description	Eligible CPT/HCPCS
Psychiatric diagnostic interview examination	90791, 90792
Individual psychotherapy	90832, 90833, 90834, 90836, 90837, 90838
Psychotherapy for crisis; first 60 minutes; or each additional 30 minutes	90839, 90840
Psychoanalysis	90845
Family or group psychotherapy	90846, 90847, 90853
Pharmacologic management, including prescription and review of medication, when performed with psychotherapy services	90863
End-Stage renal disease (ESRD) related services	90951, 90952, 90954, 90955, 90957, 90958, 90960, 90961, 90963, 90964,



	90965, 90966, 90967, 90968, 90969, 90970
Remote imaging for detection of retinal disease	92227
External mobile cardiovascular telemetry with ECG recording	93228, 93229
External patient and when performed auto activated ECG rhythm derived event recording	93268, 93270, 93271, 93272
Medical genetics and genetic counseling services	96040
Neurobehavioral status examination	96116
Administration of patient-focused health risk assessment instrument with scoring and documentation or for the benefit of the patient, per standardized instrument	96160, 96161
Individual and group medical nutrition therapy	97802, 97803, 97804; G0270
Education and training for patient self-management by a qualified, non-physician health care professional	98960, 98961, 98962
Office or other outpatient visits or consults	99201 – 99205, 99211 – 99215, 99241 – 99245
Subsequent hospital care services, with the limitation of 1 Telehealth visit every 3 days	99231, 99232, 99233
Inpatient consultation for a new or established patient	99251 - 99255
Subsequent nursing facility care services, with the limitation of 1 Telehealth visit every 30 days	99307, 99308, 99309, 99310
Prolonged service, inpatient or office	99354, 99355, 99356, 99357
Smoking and tobacco use cessation counseling visit	99406, 99407, G0436, G0437
Alcohol and substance screen and intervention	99408, 99409
Transitional care management services	99495, 99496
Advanced care planning	99497, 99498
Interactive complexity	90785
Individual and group diabetes self-management training services	G0108, G0109
Counseling visit to discuss need for lung cancer screening using low dose CT scan	G0296
Alcohol and/or substance abuse structured assessment	G0396, G0397
Follow-up inpatient Telehealth consultations furnished to beneficiaries in hospitals or SNFs	G0406*, G0407*, G0408*
Telehealth consultations, emergency department or initial inpatient	G0425*, G0426*, G0427*
Annual Wellness Visit, includes a personalized prevention plan of service	G0438, G0439
Alcohol misuse screening, counseling	G0442, G0443
Annual depression screening	G0444



High-intensity behavioral counseling to prevent sexually transmitted infection; face-to-face, individual, includes: education, skills training and guidance on how to change sexual behavior	G0445
Annual, face-to-face intensive behavioral therapy for cardiovascular disease	G0446
Face-to-face behavioral counseling for obesity	G0447
Telehealth Pharmacologic Management	G0459
Comprehensive assessment of and care planning for patients requiring chronic care management services	G0506
Telehealth consultation, critical care, initial, physicians typically spend 60 minutes communicating with the patient via telehealth; subsequent, physicians typically spend 50 minutes communicating with the patient and providers via telehealth	G0508*, G0509*
Prolonged preventive service	G0513, G0514
Opioid treatment	G2086, G2087, G2088

*Modifier GT, 95 not required

Questions and Answers

Updated March 31, 2020

Commercial:

For the next 90 days, until June 4, 2020, Aetna will waive member cost sharing for any covered telemedicine visit - regardless of diagnosis. Aetna members should use telemedicine as their first line of defense in order to limit potential exposure in physician offices. For all Aetna plans offering Teladoc® coverage, cost sharing will be waived for all Teladoc virtual visits. Cost sharing will also be waived for covered real-time virtual visits* offered by in-network providers (live video-conferencing and telephone-only telemedicine services) for all Commercial plan designs. Members may use telemedicine services for any reason, not just COVID-19 diagnosis. Self-insured plan sponsors will be able to opt-out of this program at their discretion.

Medicare:

Until further notice, Aetna will offer zero co-pay for covered telemedicine visits for any diagnosis to all Individual and Group Medicare Advantage members. Aetna Medicare Advantage members should use telemedicine as their first line of defense to limit potential exposure in physician offices. Cost sharing will be waived for all Teladoc® virtual visits. Cost sharing will also be waived for covered real-time virtual visits offered by in-network providers (live video conferencing or telephone-only telemedicine services). Medicare Advantage members may use telemedicine for any reason, not just COVID-19 diagnosis.

*In addition to the covered [Two-way, Synchronous \(i.e. real-time\) Audiovisual Interactive Medical Services – Modifier GT/95](#), the codes below will allow and waive cost share during the 90-day period.

The following codes require an audiovisual connection:

Eligible Code Description	Eligible CPT/HCPCS
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Qualified nonphysician healthcare professional online assessment, for an established patient, for up to seven days, cumulative time during the 7 days; 5-10 minutes; 11 – 20 minutes; or 21 or more minutes	G2061*, G2062*, G2063*
Alcohol and/or drug services; intensive outpatient (treatment program that operates at least 3 hours/day and at least 3 days/week and is based on an individualized treatment plan), including assessment, counseling; crisis intervention, and activity therapies or education	H0015 GT or 95
Mental health partial hospitalization, treatment, less than 24 hours.	H0035 GT or 95
Behavioral health day treatment, per hour.	H2012 GT or 95
Alcohol and/or other drug treatment program, per diem	H2036 GT or 95
Intensive outpatient psychiatric services, per diem	S9480 GT or 95
Radiation treatment management, 5 treatments	77427 GT or 95
End-stage renal disease (ESRD) related services monthly, for patients younger than 2 years of age to include monitoring for the adequacy of nutrition, assessment of growth and development, and counseling of parents; with 1 face-to-face visit by a physician or other qualified health care professional per month.	90953 GT or 95
End-stage renal disease (ESRD) related services monthly, for patients 12-19 years of age to include monitoring for the adequacy of nutrition, assessment of growth and development, and counseling of parents; with 1 face-to-face visit by a physician or other qualified health care professional per month.	90959 GT or 95
End-stage renal disease (ESRD) related services monthly, for patients 20 years of age and older; with 1 face-to-face visit by a physician or other qualified health care professional per month.	90962 GT or 95
Treatment of speech, language, voice, communication, and/or auditory processing disorder; individual	92507 GT or 95
Evaluation of speech fluency (eg, stuttering, cluttering).	92521 GT or 95
Evaluation of speech sound production (eg, articulation, phonological process, apraxia, dysarthria).	92522 GT or 95
Evaluation of speech sound production (eg, articulation, phonological process, apraxia, dysarthria); with evaluation of language comprehension and expression (eg, receptive and expressive language).	92523 GT or 95
Behavioral and qualitative analysis of voice and resonance.	92524 GT or 95
Neurobehavioral status exam (clinical assessment of thinking, reasoning and judgment, [eg, acquired knowledge, attention, language, memory, planning and problem solving, and visual spatial abilities]), by physician or other qualified health care professional, both face-to-face time with the patient and time interpreting test results and preparing the report; each additional hour (List separately in addition to code for primary procedure).	96121 GT or 95
Psychological testing evaluation services by physician or other qualified health care professional, including integration of patient data, interpretation of standardized test results and clinical data, clinical decision making, treatment planning and report, and interactive feedback to the patient, family member(s) or caregiver(s), when performed; first hour;	96130, 96131 GT or 95



+ each additional hour (List separately in addition to code for primary procedure)	
Neuropsychological testing evaluation services by physician or other qualified health care professional, including integration of patient data, interpretation of standardized test results and clinical data, clinical decision making, treatment planning and report, and interactive feedback to the patient, family member(s) or caregiver(s), when performed; first hour; + each additional hour (List separately in addition to code for primary procedure)	96132, 96133 GT or 95
Psychological or neuropsychological test administration and scoring by physician or other qualified health care professional, two or more tests, any method; first 30 minutes. + each additional 30 minutes (List separately in addition to code for primary procedure).	96136, 96137 GT or 95
Psychological or neuropsychological test administration and scoring by technician, two or more tests, any method; first 30 minutes. + Each additional 30 minutes (List separately in addition to code for primary procedure)	96138, 96139 GT or 95
Health behavior intervention, individual, face-to-face; initial 30 minutes. + each additional 15 minutes (List separately in addition to code for primary service).	96158, 96159 GT or 95
Health behavior intervention, group (2 or more patients), face-to-face; initial 30 minutes. + each additional 15 minutes (List separately in addition to code for primary service).	96164, 96165 GT or 95
Health behavior intervention, family (with the patient present), face-to-face; initial 30 minutes. + each additional 15 minutes (List separately in addition to code for primary service).	96167, 96168 GT or 95
Health behavior intervention, family (without the patient present), face-to-face; initial 30 minutes + each additional 15 minutes (List separately in addition to code for primary service).	96170, 96171 GT or 95
Therapeutic procedure, 1 or more areas, each 15 minutes; therapeutic exercises to develop strength and endurance, range of motion and flexibility.	97110 GT or 95
Therapeutic procedure, 1 or more areas, each 15 minutes; neuromuscular reeducation of movement, balance, coordination, kinesthetic sense, posture, and/or proprioception for sitting and/or standing activities.	97112 GT or 95
Therapeutic procedure, 1 or more areas, each 15 minutes; gait training (includes stair climbing).	97116 GT or 95
Behavior identification assessment, administered by a QHP, face to face with patient and/or guardians administering assessments and discussing findings and recommendations. Includes non-face-to-face analyzing of past data, scoring/interpreting the assessment, and preparing the report/treatment plan.	97151 GT or 95
Adaptive behavior treatment by protocol, administered by technician under the direction of a physician or other qualified health care professional, face-to-face with one patient, each 15 minutes.	97153 GT or 95
Adaptive behavior treatment with protocol modification, administered by QHP, which may include simultaneous direction of a technician working face to face	97155 GT or 95



w ith a patient.	
Family adaptive behavior treatment guidance administered by QHP, with parent/guardian	97156 GT or 95
Multiple-family group adaptive behavior treatment guidance, administered by QHP, w ith multiple sets of parents/guardians	97157 GT or 95
Physical therapy evaluation: low , moderate, or high complexity	97161, 97162, 97163 GT or 95
Re-evaluation of physical therapy established plan of care	97164 GT or 95
Occupational therapy evaluation, low , moderate, or high complexity	97165, 97166, 97167 GT or 95
Re-evaluation of occupational therapy established plan of care	97168 GT or 95
Self-care/home management training (eg, activities of daily living (ADL) and compensatory training, meal preparation, safety procedures, and instructions in use of assistive technology devices/adaptive equipment) direct one-on-one contact, each 15 minutes.	97535 GT or 95
Assistive technology assessment (eg, to restore, augment or compensate for existing function, optimize functional tasks and/or maximize environmental accessibility), direct one-on-one contact, w ith w ritten report, each 15 minutes.	97755 GT or 95
Orthotic(s) management and training (including assessment and fitting w hen not otherw ise reported), upper extremity(ies), low er extremity(ies) and/or trunk, initial orthotic(s) encounter, each 15 minutes.	97760 GT or 95
Prosthetic(s) training, upper and/or low er extremity(ies), initial prosthetic(s) encounter, each 15 minutes.	97761 GT or 95
Qualified nonphysician health care professional online digital evaluation and management service, for an established patient, for up to 7 days, cumulative time during the 7 days; 5-10; 11-20; or 21 or more minutes.	98970*, 98971*, 98972*
Observation care discharge day management	99217 GT or 95
Initial observation care, per day, for the evaluation and management of a patient	99218, 99219, 99220 GT or 95
Initial hospital care, per day, for the evaluation and management of a patient,	99221, 99222, 99223 GT or 95
Subsequent observation care, per day, for the evaluation and management of a patient	99224, 99225, 99226 GT or 95
Subsequent hospital care services *The limitation of 1 Telehealth visit every 3 days w ill be w aived during the 90 day period.	99231, 99232, 99233 GT or 95
Observation or inpatient hospital care, for the evaluation and management of a patient	99234, 99235, 99236



	GT or 95
Hospital discharge day management; 30 minutes or less; or more than 30 minutes	99238, 99239 GT or 95
Emergency department visit for the evaluation and management of a patient	99281, 99282, 99283, 99284, 99285 GT or 95
Critical care, evaluation and management of the critically ill or critically injured patient	99291, 99292 GT or 95
Initial nursing facility care, per day, for the evaluation and management of a patient	99304, 99305, 99306 GT or 95
Subsequent nursing facility care services *The limitation of 1 Telehealth visit every 30 days will be waived during the 90 day period	99307, 99308, 99309, 99310 GT or 95
Nursing facility discharge day management	99315, 99316 GT or 95
Domiciliary or rest home visit for the evaluation and management of a new or established patient	99327, 99328, 99334, 99335, 99336, 99337 GT or 95
Home visit for the evaluation and management of a new or established patient	99341, 99342, 99343; 99344, 99345, 99347, 99348, 99349, 99350 GT or 95
Online digital evaluation and management service, for an established patient, for up to 7 days, cumulative time during the 7 days; 5-10; 11-20; or 21 or more minutes.	99421*, 99422*, 99423*
Initial or Subsequent inpatient neonatal critical care	99468, 99469 GT or 95
Initial or Subsequent inpatient pediatric critical care	99471, 99472, 99475, 99476 GT or 95
Initial hospital care, per day, for the evaluation and management of the neonate	99477 GT or 95
Subsequent intensive care, per day, for the evaluation and management of the recovering infant	99478, 99479, 99480 GT or 95
Assessment of and care planning for a patient with cognitive impairment	99483 GT or 95

*Modifier GT, 95 not required

The following codes require an audiovisual connection or telephone:



Eligible Code Description	Eligible CPT/HCPCS
Remote evaluation of recorded video and/or images submitted by an established patient (e.g., store and forward), including interpretation with follow-up with the patient within 24 business hours, not originating from a related e/m service provided within the previous 7 days nor leading to an e/m service or procedure within the next 24 hours or soonest available appointment.	G2010*
Brief communication technology-based service, e.g. virtual check-in, by a physician or other qualified health care professional who can report evaluation and management services, provided to an established patient, not originating from a related e/m service provided within the previous 7 days nor leading to an e/m service or procedure within the next 24 hours or soonest available appointment; 5-10 minutes of medical discussion.	G2012*
Health behavior assessment or re-assessment (e.g., health-focused clinical interview, behavioral observations, clinical decision making)	96156*
Telephone assessment and management service provided by a qualified nonphysician health care professional to an established patient, parent, or guardian not originating from a related assessment and management service provided within the previous 7 days nor leading to an assessment and management service or procedure within the next 24 hours or soonest available appointment; 5-10; 11-20; or 21-30 minutes of medical discussion.	98966*, 98967*, 98968*
Telephone evaluation and management service by a physician or other qualified health care professional who may report evaluation and management services provided to an established patient, parent, or guardian not originating from a related E/M service provided within the previous 7 days nor leading to an E/M service or procedure within the next 24 hours or soonest available appointment; 5-10; 11-20; or 20-30 minutes of medical discussion.	99441*, 99442*, 99443*
Interprofessional telephone/Internet/electronic health record assessment and management service provided by a consultative physician, including a verbal and written report to the patient's treating/requesting physician or other qualified health care professional; 5-10 minutes; 11-20 minutes; 21-30 minutes; or 31 minutes of more of medical consultative discussion and review	99446*, 99447*, 99448*, 99449*
Interprofessional telephone/Internet/electronic health record assessment and management service provided by a consultative physician, including a written report to the patient's treating/requesting physician or other qualified health care professional, 5 minutes or more of medical consultative time.	99451*
Interprofessional telephone/Internet/electronic health record referral service(s) provided by a treating/requesting physician or other qualified health care professional, 30 minutes.	99452*
Psychiatric diagnostic interview examination	90791, 90792 GT or 95
Individual psychotherapy	90832, 90833, 90834, 90836, 90837, 90838 GT or 95
Psychotherapy for crisis; first 60 minutes; or each additional 30 minutes	90839, 90840 GT or 95



Psychoanalysis	90845 GT or 95
Family or group psychotherapy	90846, 90847, 90853 GT or 95
Pharmacologic management, including prescription and review of medication, when performed with psychotherapy services	90863 GT or 95
Neurobehavioral status examination	96116 GT or 95

*Modifier GT, 95 not required

For more information, see our [press release](#).

Additional References

N/A

Policy Revision Date

- Effective 01/01/20: Added coverage details for Commercial Plans and Medicare Advantage Plans
- 08/30/18 Update: Removed "Telemedicine for Consumer Business/Aetna LeapSM Plans" section. Plans are no longer active as of 01/01/2018.
- 07/05/18 Update: Removed Medicare from the "Applies to" section. Medicare Advantage follows CMS guidelines for telemedicine as of January, 2012.
- Effective 03/08/17: Existing stand-alone policy "Concierge Medicine or Boutique Medicine" added to Telemedicine and Direct Patient Contact Policy. No change in policy.
- Effective 01/26/17: Added Modifier 95.
- Effective 01/01/17: Added Telemedicine Policy for Consumer Business/Aetna LeapSM Plans.
- Effective 05/01/12: Exception removed from Direct Patient Contact Policy to allow payment when precertified.
- Effective 07/23/09: Charges for coordination of care under the "Patient-Centered Medical Home" model are eligible for payment.
- Effective 05/22/07: Charges for an online medical evaluation (e.g. eHealth visit) may be eligible for payment.