

Telemedicine Guidance for School-Based Services

The purpose of this email is to provide guidance to school districts and private/charter schools on Florida Medicaid coverage of school-based services (therapies, behavioral health) via telemedicine during the 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19) state of emergency.

Telemedicine Definition

Telemedicine is the practice of health care delivery by a practitioner who is in a site other than the site where a recipient is located, using interactive telecommunications equipment that minimally includes real time, two-way interactive communication between a recipient and a practitioner using audio and video equipment. The Agency's current telemedicine policy in the fee-for-service delivery system is available at:

http://ahca.myflorida.com/medicaid/review/General/59G_1057_TELEMEDICINE.pdf.

Telemedicine Flexibilities During the State of Emergency

It is imperative that services specified on a child's Individual Education Plan (IEP) or Individual Family Support Plan (IFSP) continue. To ensure that Florida Medicaid school-based providers (school districts and private/charter schools) can maintain continuity of care during the state of emergency, the Agency for Health Care Administration is granting the temporary use of telemedicine for key medical services.

These flexibilities apply to services when they cannot be delivered face-to-face or in-person due to school closures.

Therapy Services

Florida Medicaid will reimburse for the delivery of occupational, physical, and speech therapy services included on the Medicaid Certified School Match [fee schedule](#) when provided via telemedicine. Services must be delivered in a manner that is consistent with the child's existing plan of care/IEP or IFSP and standards of care. All service components designated in the American Medical Association's Current Procedural Terminology and the Florida Medicaid [coverage policy](#) must be provided. Providers must append the GT modifier to the procedure codes when filing claims.

Behavioral Health Services

Florida Medicaid will reimburse for the delivery of certain school-based behavioral health evaluation and counseling services via telemedicine when performed by an eligible school-based provider in a manner consistent with the Florida Medicaid coverage policy. Florida Medicaid does not cover group services via telemedicine for school-based providers. Providers must append the GT modifier to the procedure codes when filing claims.

Provider Telemedicine Requirements

School-based providers using telemedicine to deliver services must comply with the following:

- Ensure services are medically necessary and performed in accordance with the [service specific policy](#) and [fee schedule](#).
- The recipient (and their legal guardian) must be present for the duration of the service provided using telemedicine.
- Telemedicine should not be used by a provider if it may result in any reduction to the quality of care or if the service delivered through this modality could adversely impact the recipient.

- Documentation regarding the use of telemedicine must be included in the progress notes for each encounter with a recipient. All other documentation requirements for the service must be met as described in the coverage policy.
- Providers must comply with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) when providing services; all equipment and means of communication transmission must be HIPAA compliant.
- Providers must assure that the recipient has compatible equipment and the necessary connectivity in order to send and receive uninterrupted video. Telephone or electronic-based contact with a Florida Medicaid recipient without a video component is not permitted to be billed.

Reimbursement

In the fee-for-service delivery system, Florida Medicaid reimburses at the same rate detailed on the school-based [fee schedule](#).

Florida Medicaid does not reimburse for the acquisition, installation, and maintenance of telecommunication devices or systems.

Providers must append the GT modifier to the procedure codes when filing claims.

Additional Information

The Agency will continue to provide more information as it becomes available.

For more information, visit the Department's COVID-19 website: www.flhealth.gov/COVID-19.