



# Department of Vermont Health Access May 2020 Advisory

## DXC Operations During the COVID-19 Pandemic

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DXC provides Vermont Medicaid with essential business and technical services that are critical for ensuring access to health care services for Vermonters. DVHA and DXC leadership are working together daily to monitor the evolving COVID-19 situation and any potential impacts to DXC's operations. Currently, DXC teams are fully staffed and continue to perform standard levels of provider services and claims operations.

Business Continuity Planning (BCP) is integrated into DXC's normal business processes. In addition, DXC has developed a detailed plan for the ongoing COVID-19 outbreak that focuses on the safety and well-being of staff and all Vermonters while continuing to provide essential services. Actions are based on federal and state guidelines to reduce transmission and protect those at higher risk for adverse health complications.

As of March 14, all provider services are being performed virtually; onsite visits by Provider Representatives are suspended. DXC staff with job functions that can be performed from home are doing so. For the small number of staff with work that requires them to be onsite at the DXC Williston office, social distancing recommendations are practiced and monitored, and enhanced building cleaning procedures have been implemented.

We will provide updates as needed if the situation changes.

Stay Informed and Protect Your Health. <https://dvha.vermont.gov/covid-19>

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# Telehealth Services During the Response to COVID-19

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Telehealth provides Vermont Medicaid an opportunity to support Medicaid-participating providers in responding effectively to the emergency produced by coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) and to assure access to care for Vermont Medicaid members during the State of Emergency<sup>1</sup> produced by COVID-19 **without requiring** patients to travel to a health care facility.

Telehealth, the broad term that encompasses telemedicine, store and forward, and telemonitoring, refers to methods for health care service delivery using telecommunications technologies. Telehealth has the potential to bridge the gap between people, health care providers, and health systems, enabling more people to stay at home and communicate through virtual channels in alignment with guidance for implementation of mitigation strategies to slow the spread of the disease, such as social distancing. The CDC is calling for health care facilities to adopt telemedicine<sup>2</sup>, defined as 2-way, real-time, audio and video/visual interactive communication, to protect patients and providers. Vermont Medicaid is also encouraging providers to continue to use telemedicine to care for Medicaid members during the Emergency when possible<sup>3</sup>. As telemedicine may not be possible for Medicaid providers to reach all of their Medicaid members requiring care during the Emergency, Vermont Medicaid has recently implemented temporary reimbursement for medically necessary and clinically appropriate services delivered by audio-only telephone (this is not telemedicine) at the same rate as the service being provided in a face-to-face setting<sup>4</sup>.

Vermont Medicaid-participating providers are encouraged to continue to review Vermont Medicaid's existing health care administrative rule on telehealth and to check the DVHA COVID-19 webpage to review changes in the Medicaid program as Vermont Medicaid implements temporary policy changes to respond to the Emergency<sup>5</sup>.

Additionally, providers may find more information regarding telehealth through the Vermont Program for Quality in Health Care's (VPQHC) telehealth resource center website. VPQHC is spearheading Vermont's multi-payer telehealth stakeholder work group, which started meeting prior to the COVID-19 crisis at the request of the Vermont General Assembly and has acted to collate and distribute a wide variety of telehealth information since the onset of the crisis. On the VPQHC site, providers can find payer policies, telehealth implementation resources, and upcoming telehealth events. Please bookmark this site if you are a provider who may need telehealth technical assistance now or in the future. You will find helpful information here: [VPQHC Telehealth Resource Center](#)

<sup>1</sup> Declaration of [State of Emergency](#) in Response to COVID-19.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-hcf.html>

<sup>3</sup> [Vermont Medicaid: Telehealth, Telemedicine and Telephonic Coverage](#)

<sup>4</sup> <https://dvha.vermont.gov/covid-19>

<sup>5</sup> <https://humanservices.vermont.gov/sites/ahsnew/files/documents/MedicaidPolicy/3.101-tele-health-rule-adopted-rule.pdf>

# Guidance to Support Medicaid Providers During the Emergency Response to COVID-19

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DVHA's mission is to improve the health and well being of Vermonters by providing access to quality health care cost effectively.

- Vermont Medicaid providers are encouraged to continue to use telemedicine to care for their Medicaid members during this Emergency when possible;
- As telemedicine (2 way, real time, audio and video/visual) may not be possible for Medicaid providers to reach all their Medicaid members requiring care during this Emergency, Vermont Medicaid will be temporarily providing reimbursement for medically necessary and clinically appropriate services delivered by communications technology, including telephone, from a date of service of 3/13/2020.

## Telehealth & Telemedicine

For the purposes of Vermont Medicaid, telehealth refers to methods for health care service delivery using telecommunications technologies.

Telehealth includes:

- Telemedicine ( 2 way, real time, audio and video/visual interactive communication through a secure connection that complies with HIPAA);
- Store and forward (the asynchronous transfer of medical information from provider at one site to a provider at a distant site through a secure connection that complies with HIPAA);
- Telemonitoring (the remote monitoring of a member's health related data, i.e. by a home health agency).

<https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/benefits/telemedicine/index.html>

[https://humanservices.vermont.gov/sites/ahsnew/files/documents/MedicaidPolicy/3.101\\_telehealth\\_rule\\_adopted\\_rule.pdf](https://humanservices.vermont.gov/sites/ahsnew/files/documents/MedicaidPolicy/3.101_telehealth_rule_adopted_rule.pdf)

## New Temporary Coverage of Services Delivered by Telephone During the Emergency Response to COVID-19

During the Emergency response to COVID 19, Vermont Medicaid will provide reimbursement for Medicaid providers delivering medically necessary and clinically appropriate services, including those delivered by telephone (audio only) as follows:

- The use of 3 'triage' codes (G0071 [for FQHCs & RHCs only], G2012, and G2010) to allow providers to receive payment for brief virtual communication services used to determine whether an office visit or other service is needed. These codes should only be billed if they do not result in a service needing to be delivered in the next 24 hours (or next available appointment) and the virtual check in/remote evaluation is not related to a service provided in the past 7 days;
- Providing reimbursement at the same rate for medically necessary, clinically appropriate services (e.g. new patient and established patient office visits, psychotherapy, etc.) delivered by telephone as the rate currently established for Medicaid covered services provided through telemedicine/face to face as long as the claim is submitted to Vermont Medicaid with a V3 modifier (to indicate "service delivered via telephone, i.e. audio only") and a place of service code of "99 other."

## Provider Resources

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Provider Manuals: <http://www.vtmedicaid.com/#/manuals>

Provider Resources: <http://www.vtmedicaid.com/#/resources>

VT Medicaid Banner: <http://www.vtmedicaid.com/#/bannerMain>

*\*\*Please make sure to check the Banner regularly for the most up-to-date information.\*\**

Provider Enrollment Application Packets: <http://www.vtmedicaid.com/#/provEnrollAppPackets>

To request a digital copy of the advisory, please email [vtpubs-comm@dx.com](mailto:vtpubs-comm@dx.com)

## Contact Us

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