



Mississippi Workers' Compensation Commission

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<http://www.mwcc.ms.gov>

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March 24, 2020

BULLETIN REGARDING TELEMEDICINE DURING THE COVID-19 CRISIS

On March 14, 2020 Governor Tate Reeves declared a state of emergency to address the high risk of an outbreak of the novel coronavirus, identified as COVID-19, in this State. Accordingly, it is imperative that medical clinics and hospitals have the resources to treat coronavirus victims. Furthermore, people who do not have coronavirus symptoms but still need non-emergency medical care should avoid areas that could result in their exposure to coronavirus. To that end and pursuant to authority granted by Miss. Code Ann. § 25-43-3.108, the Mississippi Workers' Compensation Commission ("Commission") temporarily expanded its 2019 Medical Fee Schedule ("Fee Schedule") rules for telemedicine services to include not only physicians, but also physician assistants, nurse practitioners, physical therapists, occupational therapists, speech therapists, psychiatrists, clinical psychologists, and dieticians who are licensed in the State of Mississippi. The temporary rule change is in effect from March 16, 2020 until June 30, 2020. A memorandum concerning reimbursement for telemedicine services is attached to this bulletin and can also be found on the front page of Commission's website at www.mwcc.ms.gov.

On March 15, 2020, the Mississippi State Board of Medical Licensure ("Board of Medical Licensure") issued a Proclamation to encourage all physicians to utilize telemedicine to avoid any unnecessary patient exposure to coronavirus. Pursuant to action taken by the Board of Medical Licensure, this Commission urges workers' compensation insurance carriers and self-insurers to adopt procedures which encourage injured workers to use telemedicine in an effort to reduce the virus' spread. Therefore, the following limitations applicable to telemedicine services found in the Fee Schedule are suspended until June 30, 2020:

1. Any limitation on the use of audio-only telephonic consultations.
2. Any requirement that limits coverage to health care providers in a certain telemedicine network. It is also intended by the Commission that mental health and therapeutic services provided by telemedicine consultation be covered to the same extent that the services would be covered if they were provided through in-person consultation.
3. Any requirement that limits coverage to provider consultations only. It is intended by the Commission that telemedicine consultations between a patient and provider be covered, and that they be covered to the same extent that the services would be covered if they were provided through in-person consultation.

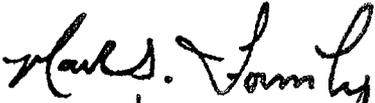
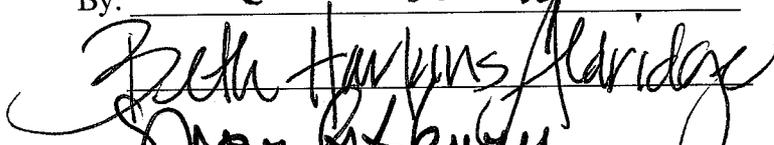
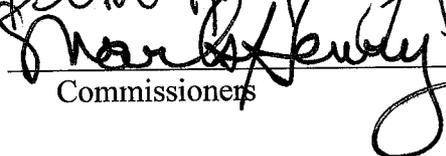
For routine evaluation and management of patients, medical providers may bill for patient evaluation and management codes up to a level 4, regardless of whether provided telephonically or using visual equipment. However, medical providers may bill for only telephonic visits when the provider speaks directly with the patient. Providers may not bill for services when only office staff and/or a nurse speaks with the patient, regardless of whether the provider is consulted.

The actions taken by Governor Reeves, the Board of Medical Licensure, and this Commission are intended to protect the citizens of this State and to help limit the duration of this crisis. Therefore the Commission urges workers' compensation insurance carriers and self-insured employers to comply with the provisions of this bulletin immediately and thereafter through June 30, 2020, at which time the Commission will reassess the situation.

This notice is subject to change at any time at the Commission's discretion. If you have any questions regarding the Commission's telehealth rules, please contact Connie Mills, Director of Medical Cost Containment, at cmills@mwcc.ms.gov or (601) 987-4280 or Jeff Skelton, Senior Attorney, at jskelton@mwcc.ms.gov or (601) 987-4265.

MISSISSIPPI WORKERS' COMPENSATION
COMMISSION

By:




Commissioners

MWCC - Expansion of the rule for Telemedicine Services

The practice of Telemedicine is currently covered in the Mississippi Workers' Compensation Commission (MWCC) 2019 Fee Schedule but is limited to only physicians holding a valid Mississippi license. MWCC has reevaluated Telemedicine/Telehealth/Virtual services during the current COVID-19 crisis and is providing an expansion of the rule.

As of 03/16/2020, the MWCC has authorized the expansion of the electronic communication rule via Telemedicine/Telehealth/Virtual services to workers' compensation patients not only to physicians but also to include the following: physician assistants, nurse practitioners, physical therapists, occupational therapists, speech therapists, psychiatrists, clinical psychologists, dietitians who are licensed to practice in Mississippi.

Reimbursement for services provided via Telemedicine/Telehealth/Virtually shall not be denied by workers compensation payors for CPT codes noted with a star icon and billed with Modifier 95. These codes are listed in Appendix P of the CPT manual and will be posted separately on the MWCC website. Additionally, CPT codes for services that are typically billed by PT/OT/ST on pages 295 and 296 of the 2019 fee schedule are authorized to be provided via electronic communication.

At the present, the timeline for the expansion of this rule will extend from 03/16/2020 to 06/30/2020. This notice is subject to change at any time at the discretion of the Mississippi Workers' Compensation Commission. Please visit <https://mwcc.ms.gov/#/home> for up-to-date information.