

Apple Health (Medicaid) frequently asked questions (FAQ) for diabetes education providers in the COVID-19 pandemic

****Effective date 2/1/2022—See changes in red font****

In this time of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Health Care Authority is aware that usual and customary ways of providing and billing/reporting services may not be feasible. It is also understood that different providers will have different capabilities. Therefore, in the interest of public health, HCA's Apple Health (Medicaid) program is trying to be as flexible as possible and is creating new policies that will allow you to provide medically necessary services and bill or report the encounter with the most appropriate code you determine applicable using the guidance below.

This FAQ reinforces the agency's current policies regarding telemedicine as defined in WAC 182-531-1730 and covers the new telehealth policies that will only be in effect during this health care crisis. We will update this FAQ as necessary to respond to new information as it develops.

The FAQ below was revised after new information was released Friday, March 20, by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) in an all-state call about the use of telehealth in Medicaid. Note: Medicaid is not subject to the same policies as Medicare.

Frequently Asked Questions

Telemedicine and telehealth policies and how to bill – including diabetes education providers

Q: What is considered telemedicine and what is considered telehealth?

For Apple Health, **telemedicine** is defined as services that are:

- Delivered via HIPAA compliant interactive, audio and video telecommunications (including web-based applications), and
The provider works within their scope of practice to provide a covered service to an Apple Health eligible client.

There are instances when telemedicine is not an option and providers need to use another method to provide care.

For Apple Health, **telehealth** is defined as services that are:

- Delivered via modalities approved during the pandemic to provide modalities used during the pandemic to provide assessment, diagnosis, intervention, consultation, supervision and information in lieu of an in-person visit.
- Approved modalities include audio-only (telephone calls)

For telemedicine and telehealth, the service rendered must be equivalent to the procedure code used to bill for the service.

HCA-contracted managed care organizations (MCOs) are adopting these policies as well.*

See HCA’s *Apple Health (Medicaid) clinical policy and billing for COVID-19* on [HCA’s Provider billing guides and fee schedules webpage](#), under *Telehealth* for more information about using communication and electronic technologies to provide care and how to bill.

Q: Are telemedicine services covered?

All Apple Health programs (fee-for-service and managed care) cover telemedicine diabetes education when they meet the definition for telemedicine. Telemedicine services are paid at the same rate as if the services were provided as an in-person visit.

See HCA’s *Apple Health (Medicaid) clinical policy and billing for COVID-19* on [HCA’s Provider billing guides and fee schedules webpage](#), under *Telehealth* for instructions on how to bill for telemedicine.

*Consult with the client’s MCO regarding billing requirements.

Q: Are telehealth services covered?

Yes, if delivered via audio only

Q. Which place of service (POS) should I use when billing HIPAA-compliant telemedicine (audio-visual) and telehealth (audio-only)?

Effective October 1, 2021 to April 3, 2022:

Apple Health is allowing audio-only/telephone to be used when current practice for providing services is not an option (face-to-face, telemedicine). Report the service modality code (CPT or HCPCS code) as you would if the encounter was in person. In these cases, Apple Health is temporarily allowing services using a telephone, as described above, to conduct an office visit. Report the code (CPT or HCPC) as you would if the encounter was in person. Always document the modality used for delivery in the health care record. Remember to use the POS indicator that best describes where the client is (e.g., 12 is home, 31 is skilled nursing facility, 13 is assisted living facility, etc.).

Do not bill with the providers location as the place of service.

*HCA-contracted MCOs are also adopting these policies.

Effective for dates of service on and after April 4, 2022:

(Providers whose systems are ready to bill using the new POS 10 prior to April 4, 2022, may begin to do so effective for claims with dates of service on and after January 1, 2022.)

- Use the new POS 10 and the new definition of POS 02.
- Choose [the appropriate POS](#) when services were provided via telemedicine (audio-visual) or telehealth (audio-only).
- When billing for POS 02:
 - Add modifier 95 if the distant site is designated as a nonfacility.
 - Nonfacility providers must add modifier 95 to the claim to receive the nonfacility payment.

Place of service (POS)	Description
02	The location where health services and health related services are provided or received, through telecommunication technology. Patient is not located in their home when receiving health services or health related services through telecommunication technology.
10	The location where health services and health related services are provided or received through telecommunication technology. Patient is located in their home (which is a location other than a hospital or other facility where the patient receives care in a private residence) when receiving health services or health related services through telecommunication technology.

Q. Which modifier should we use to denote that the services were provided via telehealth (audio-only)?

The American Medical Association (AMA) released a new audio-only modifier on 12/30/21 with an effective date of 1/1/22. HCA is implementing the use of the modifier effective 2/1/22. Modifier FQ is allowed for DOS 1/1/22-1/31/22. Please note that Behavioral Health and Mental Health Services have different allowances for the FQ modifier. See [Apple Health \(Medicaid\) behavioral health policy and billing during the COVID-19 pandemic \(FAQ\)](#).

Modifier	Modifier Descriptor
93	Synchronous Telemedicine Service Rendered Via Telephone or Other Real-Time Interactive Audio-Only Telecommunications System: Synchronous telemedicine service is defined as a real-time interaction between a physician or other qualified health care professional and a patient who is located away at a distant site from the physician or other qualified health care professional. The totality of the communication of information exchanged between the physician or other qualified health care professional and the patient during the course of the synchronous telemedicine service must be of an amount and nature that is sufficient to meet the key components and/or requirements of the same service when rendered via a face-to-face interaction.

Q: How do I bill for diabetes education if I am using audio-only/telephone calls to provide services?

Report the appropriate HCPCS or revenue code as you would if the encounter was in person. Always document the modality used for delivery in the health care record.

- Choose appropriate procedure codes G0108 and G0109
- If the service was provided via audio-only telehealth then use **modifier 93** and the [appropriate POS \(02, 10\)](#).

HCA-contracted MCOs are adopting these policies as well.*

Telehealth services are paid at the same rate as if the services was provided as an in-person visit.

Q: Do I need to take any measures to inform the client about these technologies that may not be HIPAA compliant?

Yes, clients must be informed when using a non-HIPAA compliant technology. This can be done in the following ways:

- Using mail to obtain written consent
- Use of an electronic signature
- Verbal: the information about this approach not being HIPPA compliant being provided and the verbal consent **must** be documented and dated in the record. Once in-person visits are resumed, the client must sign a consent form that communicates in writing that the client provided consent to use a platform that could not protect their personal health information.