

TITLE 317. OKLAHOMA HEALTH CARE AUTHORITY
CHAPTER 30. MEDICAL PROVIDERS-FEE FOR SERVICE
SUBCHAPTER 3. GENERAL PROVIDER POLICIES
PART 1. GENERAL SCOPE AND ADMINISTRATION

317:30-3-27. Telemedicine

(a) **Applicability and scope.** The purpose of this Section is to implement telemedicine policy that improves access to health care services by enabling the provision of medical specialty care in rural ~~or underserved~~ areas to meet the needs of members and providers alike, while complying with all applicable federal and state statutes and regulations. Telemedicine services are not an expansion of SoonerCare covered services but an option for the delivery of certain covered services. SoonerCare views telemedicine no differently than an office visit or outpatient consultation. However, if there are technological difficulties in performing an objective through medical assessment or problems in member's understanding of telemedicine, hands-on-assessment and/or care must be provided for the member. Quality of health care must be maintained regardless of the mode of delivery.

(b) **Definitions.** The following words and terms, when used in this Section, have the following meaning, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise.

(1) **"Certified or licensed health care professional"** means an individual who has successfully completed a prescribed program of study in any variety of health fields and who has obtained an Oklahoma state license or certificate indicating his or her competence to practice in that field.

(2) **"Distant site"** means the site where the specialty physician/practitioner providing the professional service is located at the time the service is provided via audio/video telecommunications.

(3) **"Interactive telecommunications"** means multimedia communications equipment that includes, at a minimum, audio/video equipment permitting two-way, real-time or near real-time service or consultation between the member and the practitioner.

(4) **"Originating site"** means the location of the SoonerCare member at the time the service is being performed by a contracted provider via audio/video telecommunications.

(5) **"Rural area"** means a county with a population of less than 50,000 people.

(6) **"Store and forward"** means the asynchronous transmission of medical information to be reviewed at a later time. A camera or similar device records (stores) an image(s) that is then sent (forwarded) via telecommunications media to another location for later viewing. The sending of x-rays, computed tomography scans, or magnetic resonance images are common store and forward applications. The original image may be recorded and/or

forwarded in digital or analog format and may include video "clips" such as ultrasound examinations, where the series of images that are sent may show full motion when reviewed at the receiving location.

(7) **"Telehealth"** means the use of telecommunication technologies for clinical care (telemedicine), patient teaching and home health, health professional education (distance learning), administrative and program planning, and other diverse aspects of a health care delivery system.

(8) **"Telemedicine"** means the practice of health care delivery, diagnosis, consultation and treatment and the transfer of medical data through interactive audio, video or data communications that occur in the real-time or near real-time and in the physical presence of the member.

(9) **"Telemedicine network"** means a network infrastructure, consisting of computer systems, software and communications equipment to support telemedicine services.

~~(10) **"Underserved area"** means an area that meets the definition of a medically underserved area (MUA) or medically underserved population (MUP) by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).~~

(c) **Coverage.** SoonerCare coverage for telemedicine technology is limited to consultations, office visits, individual psychotherapy, psychiatric diagnostic interview examinations and testing, mental health assessments and pharmacologic management.

(1) An interactive telecommunications system is required as a condition of coverage.

(2) Coverage for telemedicine services is limited to members in rural areas, ~~underserved areas~~, or geographic areas where there is a lack of medical/psychiatric/mental health expertise locally. The coverage of all telemedicine services is at the discretion of OHCA.

(3) Office and outpatient visits that are conducted via telemedicine are counted toward the applicable benefit limits for these services.

(4) Authorized originating sites are:

- (A) The office of a physician or practitioner;
- (B) A hospital;
- (C) A school;
- (D) An outpatient behavioral health clinic;
- (E) A critical access hospital;
- (F) A rural health clinic (RHC);
- (G) A federally qualified health center (FQHC); or
- (H) An Indian Health Service facility, a Tribal health facility or an Urban Indian clinic (I/T/U).

(5) Authorized distant site specialty providers are contracted:

- (A) Physicians;
- (B) Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioners;
- (C) Physicians Assistants;

- (D) Genetic Counselors;
- (E) Licensed Behavioral Health Professionals;
- (F) Dietitians; and
- (G) I/T/U=s with specialty service providers as listed in (A) through (F) above.

(d) **Non-covered services.** Non-covered services include:

- (1) Telephone conversation;
- (2) Electronic mail message; and
- (3) Facsimile.

(e) **Store and forward technology.** SoonerCare covers store and forward technology for applications in which, under conventional health care delivery, the medical service does not require face-to-face contact between the member and the provider. Examples include teleradiology, telepathology, fetal monitor strips, as well as physician interpretation of electrocardiogram and electroencephalogram readings that are transmitted electronically.

SoonerCare does not consider these services telemedicine as defined by OHCA and will not reimburse an originating site fee for these services.

(f) **Conditions.** The following conditions apply to all services rendered via telemedicine.

(1) Interactive audio and video telecommunications must be used, permitting real-time communication between the distant site physician or practitioner and the SoonerCare member. As a condition of payment the member must be present and participating in the telemedicine visit.

(2) Only telemedicine services provided utilizing an OHCA approved network are eligible for reimbursement.

(3) For SoonerCare reimbursement, telemedicine connections to rural areas must be located within Oklahoma and the health providers must be licensed in Oklahoma or practice at an I/T/U.

(4) The telemedicine equipment and transmission speed must be technically sufficient to support the service billed. If a peripheral diagnostic scope is required to assess the member, it must provide adequate resolution or audio quality for decision making. Staff involved in the telemedicine visit need to be trained in the use of the telemedicine equipment and competent in its operation.

(5) An appropriate certified or licensed health care professional at the originating site is required to present the member to the physician or practitioner at the distant site and remain available as clinically appropriate.

(6) The health care practitioner must obtain written consent from the SoonerCare member that states they agree to participate in the telemedicine-based office visit. The consent form must include a description of the risks, benefits and consequences of telemedicine and be included in the member's medical record.

(7) If the member is a minor child, a parent/guardian must present the minor child for telemedicine services unless otherwise exempted by State or Federal law. The parent/guardian

need not attend the telemedicine session unless attendance is therapeutically appropriate.

(8) The member retains the right to withdraw at any time.

(9) All existing confidentiality protections apply.

(10) The member has access to all transmitted medical information, with the exception of live interactive video as there is often no stored data in such encounters.

(11) There will be no dissemination of any member images or information to other entities without written consent from the member.

(g) **Reimbursement.**

(1) A facility fee will be paid to the originating site when the appropriate telemedicine facility fee code is used.

(A) Hospital outpatient: When the originating site is a hospital outpatient department, payment for the originating site facility fee will be paid according to the SoonerCare fee schedule.

(B) Hospital inpatient: For hospital inpatients, payment for the originating site facility fee will be paid outside the Diagnostic Related Group (DRG) payment.

(C) FQHCs and RHCs: The originating site facility fee for telemedicine services is not an FQHC or RHC service. When an FQHC or RHC serves as the originating site, the originating site facility fee is paid separately from the center or clinic all-inclusive rate.

(D) Facilities of the Indian Health Service, tribal facilities or Urban Indian Clinics: When an I/T/U serves as the originating site, the originating site facility fee is reimbursed outside the OMB rate.

(E) Physicians'/practitioners' offices: When the originating site is a physician's office, the originating site facility fee will be paid according to the SoonerCare fee schedule. If a provider from the originating site performs a separately identifiable service for the member on the same day as telemedicine, documentation for both services must be clearly and separately identified in the member's medical record.

(2) Services provided by telemedicine must be billed with the appropriate modifier. Only the portion of the telemedicine service rendered from the distant site is billed with the modifier.

(3) If the technical component of an X-ray, ultrasound or electrocardiogram is performed at the originating site during a telemedicine transmission, the technical component and a telemedicine facility fee are billed by the originating site. The professional component of the procedure and the appropriate visit code are billed by the distant site.

(4) Post payment review may result in adjustments to payment when a telemedicine modifier is billed inappropriately or not billed when appropriate.

(5) The cost of telemedicine equipment and transmission is not

reimbursable by SoonerCare.

(h) **Documentation.**

(1) Documentation must be maintained at the originating and the distant locations to substantiate the services provided.

(2) Documentation must indicate the services were rendered via telemedicine, the location of the originating and distant sites, and which OHCA approved network was used.

(3) All other SoonerCare documentation guidelines apply to the services rendered via telemedicine. Examples include but are not limited to:

(A) Chart notes;

(B) Start and stop times;

(C) Service provider's credentials; and

(D) Provider's signature.

(i) **Telemedicine network standards.** In order to be an approved telemedicine network, an applicant must be contracted with the OHCA and meet certain technical and privacy standards stated within the contract in order to ensure the highest quality of care. The OHCA has discretion and the final authority to approve or deny any telemedicine network based on agency and/or SoonerCare members' needs.