



To: TennCare Managed Care Organizations (MCOs)
From: Stephen Smith, Director
Date: December 16, 2020
Subject: Implementation of Telehealth Legislation and the Extension of Telephonic Visits

Effective August 20, 2020, Tennessee's Legislature enacted Public Chapter No. 4 relative to the electronic delivery of health care:

<https://publications.tnsosfiles.com/acts/111/2nd%20Extraordinary%20Session/pc0004EOS.pdf>

This statute requires health insurance entities to provide coverage for provider-based telehealth visits if the applicable health insurance policy covers the same health care service if delivered by in-person means. Provider-based telemedicine is defined in this statute as the use of HIPAA compliant, real-time, interactive televisual technology. The statute specifically excludes telephone only encounters from the definition of provider-based telemedicine.

Considering both the barriers that rural communities face and the impacts of the ongoing COVID-19 public emergency, **TennCare and TennCare's MCOs will extend their current telehealth coverage policies, including coverage of telephone only encounters, through March 31, 2021.** TennCare's telehealth coverage policies may be found at:

[TennCare COVID-19 Information Page](#)

TennCare has posted its telehealth policies specific to medical providers, behavioral health providers, and skilled therapy (PT/ST/OT) providers on TennCare's COVID-19 Information Page, and we encourage all providers to review TennCare's COVID-19 Information Page, as well as the MCOs' websites under the section, COVID-19 Provider Information:

[Amerigroup Tennessee Provider COVID-19 Information Website](#)

[BlueCare Tennessee Provider COVID-19 Information Website](#)

[UnitedHealthcare Community Plan Provider COVID-19 Information Website](#)

We hope that the passage of telehealth legislation and TennCare's extension of reimbursement of telephone only encounters will allow health care providers to continue to provide safe and effective care to our members during the COVID-19 public health emergency.

Each MCO should notify their contracted providers of TennCare's extension of current telehealth coverage polices through March 31, 2021.

We are grateful for your continued care of our TennCare members during these unprecedented times.