

OMSs Using Telehealth

Overview on incorporation in your practice



The COVID-19 pandemic has placed an enormous burden on healthcare communities, creating a significant overload of the available resources in many areas. Recommended ways to mitigate the spread of this virus has led to “stay-at-home” orders, social distancing and the closure of public places as well as dental and medical offices for all except emergency procedures. Despite the closure of practices, dental and medical needs continue to exist, and one way to provide screening evaluations is through telehealth methods – including the practice of teledentistry or telemedicine.

1 Types of telehealth

- Live video or synchronous two-way interaction – real-time video
- Asynchronous method – store and forward

2 Documentation requirements

- Thoroughly document interactions, including mode of telehealth service
- Provide a summary of services to the patient

3 Necessary standards

- Establish referral protocols
- Services should be consistent with in-person services
- All appropriate laws and regulations must be followed
 - Note: State laws vary and may or may not provide for the ability of an out-of-state provider to utilize telehealth services within the state of residence of the patient
- Privacy and security of dental/medical information must be absolute, with the provider being responsible for all information – including the security of any data exchange
- Patients should:
 - Stay informed of all providers involved in their treatment
 - Be actively involved in treatment decisions
 - Consent to telehealth treatment
 - Understand the financial implications of telehealth treatment

4 Types of appointments appropriate for telehealth

- Initial patient visits or consultations with previously submitted complete health history information and radiological or laboratory data
- Follow-up visits
- Postoperative evaluations

Telehealth cannot be a substitute for a thorough clinical physical examination, which must be performed in-person.

5 Billing considerations

- Guidance is constantly in flux. Be sure to review the following for the latest information:
 - [AAOMS Telehealth Resources website](#)
 - [Telehealth Resources infographic](#)

The COVID-19 pandemic has heightened awareness of – and the need for – telehealth treatments. While not new, this innovative approach continues to evolve. Telehealth can be considered as one option to help provide the best care for patients in today’s uncertain environment.

