



Division of Medical Services
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MEMORANDUM

To: Autism EPSDT Providers

From: Division of Medical Services (DMS)

Date: March 31, 2020

Re: Use of Telemedicine to Provide Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) Therapy by a BCBA during COVID-19 Outbreak

In response to the COVID-19 outbreak in Arkansas and consistent with CMS's coverage and payment for COVID-19 diagnostic testing, DMS is adding an addendum to the guidance issued on March 20th in (DMS-04) which suspended the prohibition on use of telemedicine technology for limited Applied Behavior Analysis Therapy services provided to established patients during the COVID-19 outbreak and the declaration of public health emergency. This addendum expands allowable telemedicine services to include services provided by licensed BCBA or BCBA-D.

The telemedicine services described below for Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) will be available and billable on April 3, 2020, and will be retroactive to dates of service, March 27, 2020. The services will be available to established patients only, as described for dates of service thirty (30) days from today, with the possibility of extending for additional thirty-day periods.

97155 EP

Adaptive behavior treatment provided by a BCBA or BCBA-D. Individual adaptive behavior treatment by BCBA, face-to-face with the patient and may also include caregivers. This includes implementation and modification of treatment the plan. This may also include simultaneous direction of technician.

All units are prior authorized.

97156 EP

Family adaptive behavior treatment, provided by a BCBA, face to face with parents and/or caregivers. Family sessions should address education of the parents or caregivers on the patient's plan of care, specific objectives, treatment approaches, etc. as they relate to the individual client's ASD symptoms and how to address them in the patient's natural environment.

All units are prior authorized.

To bill for this service, the BCBA must document that the parent or caregiver was present with a beneficiary. The service must be provided using the appropriate real-time technology that includes both

a video and audio component. The originating service requirement is relaxed so that the parent can receive this service from their home.

The service may be provided as the regular “face to face” at the same rate. All services must be prior authorized by eQHealth Solutions.

BCBA is a licensed clinician that may perform telemedicine under the scope of their license.

To allow for continued therapy services for established patients during this time of social distancing, DMS is lifting the requirement that the beneficiary be located at a healthcare facility (originating site) to receive telemedicine services for the following services only:

- Adaptive behavior treatment provided by a BCBA or BCBA-D
- Family adaptive behavior treatment guidance, by a BCBA or BCBA-D

Parental or caregiver involvement is required during the session. Additionally, the technology used must be real-time and include a video and audio component. The sessions are limited to 15 minutes a piece, with a maximum of three (3) sessions per week.

The following services **cannot** be completed via telemedicine:

1. Evaluations and re-evaluations. However, if an annual evaluation is due during this time, the deadline may be extended until the patient is able to come into the office.
2. Group Services.

To ensure quality and consistency of care to Medicaid beneficiaries, DMS will coordinate with the Office of the Medicaid Inspector General (OMIG) to conduct retrospective reviews and audits of these services during this time. Please keep all records of services as required by Medicaid physician billing and telemedicine rules.

Billing Instructions

To bill for this service, the therapist must document that the parent was present with a beneficiary who is under age eighteen (18). The service must be provided using the appropriate real-time technology that includes both a video and audio component. The originating service requirement is relaxed so that the parent can receive this service from their home.

All services must be prior authorized by eQHealth Solutions. When requesting a PA through the eQHealth portal, the process type is the same process type currently used for submission.

Note: The rate for approved services are the same .

When billing for these services you must include all modifiers on the claim. All Therapy claims submitted for Telemedicine must include the GT modifier and (02) as the place of service.

If you have any questions on billing please contact Portland Gilbert at Portland.Gilbert@dhs.arkansas.gov