



TELEDENTISTRY IN MARYLAND DURING COVID-19 July 2020

WHAT IS TELEDENTISTRY?

Teledentistry is a method of providing oral health consultation, care, and education without the patient having to make an office visit. It enables clinicians to view a dental problem in a patient's mouth, triage dental conditions, address urgent dental issues, keep patients out of emergency rooms, or educate patients on good oral hygiene habits. Teledentistry is most often provided through a video appointment between the provider and patient.

Teledentistry can also help clinicians establish and build trust with their patients. It can be used to engage patients who are at high risk of dental disease and decay, discuss how oral health can affect chronic disease, and educate them on the importance of good oral health to good overall health. Although virtual visits will never replace face-to-face care, the ability to identify urgent oral health issues and reduce emergency department visits for dental conditions is a useful tool to reduce the cost of care and improve the oral health of Marylanders, particularly those in rural areas of the state that lack a sufficient number of providers.

Teledentistry can be used to maintain the oral health of Marylanders, both during a pandemic and once it is over, but it does require adequate broadband internet and a modest level of technical literacy. It does not change a provider's scope of practice. A dental provider is only allowed to use teledentistry to perform services they can perform in person.

MARYLAND'S RESPONSE TO COVID-19

Essential Services during COVID-19

On March 13, 2020, Governor Hogan issued an [Executive Order](#) that permitted the Secretary of Health to limit the provision of health care to essential services. The Secretary of Health issued subsequent [guidance on dental services](#) that limits the provision of services only to those services which are critically necessary to maintain the health of the patient. Since then, the Secretary of Health has eased restrictions and allowed elective services to resume as long as the provider meets requirements for protective equipment and social distancing.

Proactive Establishment of Authority of Dentists and Other Health Care Practitioners to Provide Telehealth – During COVID-19 State of Emergency and After

Governor Hogan signed legislation on telehealth into law on April 3, 2020. HB 448/SB 402 (Delegate Rosenberg/Senator Kagan) [authorizes all licensed health care practitioners](#) to provide telehealth services under their respective licensure laws. Health care providers must follow the standard of care and comply with existing rules regarding consent and privacy. The legislation does not impact reimbursement (see remainder of this document regarding other actions affecting reimbursement).

As this law is in effect permanently, health care practitioners will be authorized to provide telehealth after the COVID-19 State of Emergency is lifted.

Maryland License Required if Patient is in Maryland

Health care practitioners, including dentists and dental hygienists, must be licensed in Maryland if the patient is physically located in Maryland. If a patient is physically outside of Maryland, consult with the dental board in that state to determine licensure requirements. Some states have waived state licensure requirements during COVID-19.

MARYLAND MEDICAID BILLING UPDATES

Coverage under Skygen

The Maryland Medicaid Program has directed the Administrative Service Organization, Skygen, to [reimburse for telehealth dentistry services during the COVID-19](#) State of Emergency. This directive affects the following Medicaid coverage groups: children (Maryland Healthy Smiles), dually eligible adults between the ages of 21 and 64 in the Medicaid Adult Dental Pilot program, pregnant women, participants in the Rare and Expensive Case Management (REM) program, and adults under the 26 years old who have aged out of foster care.

The Maryland Department of Health Medicaid Program (“Maryland Medicaid”) updated the billing codes for its Telehealth Program for certain provider types. Dentistry rendered via telehealth, also known as teledentistry, is included. The Department will conduct a review of codes that may be appropriate for teledentistry after the end of the State of Emergency.

Services must be delivered through synchronous (real-time) audio-visual technology. The place of service should be marked as a “02” to indicate a telehealth service.

D0140	Limited oral evaluation -problem focused		\$43.20
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Coverage under HealthChoice

Most managed care organizations (MCOs) provide basic dental coverage. According to an MDAC survey, all MCOs are voluntarily following the MDH directive to Skygen and reimbursing according to MDH guidelines.

Coverage under Private Insurance and Medicare Advantage Plans

Check with the insurer about coverage for telehealth dental services. If a Medicare Advantage plan covers dental services, then check with that plan for **telehealth** dental reimbursement policies.

OTHER TELEHEALTH DENTISTRY REGULATORY ISSUES

Impact of Temporary Relaxation of HIPAA on use of Technology for Telehealth

Governor Hogan issued an [Executive Order](#) which suspends some patient privacy protections in the delivery of telehealth services. This means that health care practitioners can use communication

platforms which are not HIPAA compliant such as FaceTime, Zoom and Skype. As a result, health care practitioners can more quickly ramp-up telehealth services using available video conferencing tools and other technology. Providers are encouraged to use platforms that are as secure as possible.

Similarly, the federal government has temporarily relaxed enforcement of HIPAA requirements.

Health care practitioners are encouraged to notify patients that third-party applications potentially introduce privacy risks, and providers should enable all available encryption and privacy modes when using such applications.

Consent – Written or Oral

According to HB 448/SB 402, providers must obtain either the written or oral consent of patients when providing telehealth services.

Prescribing Controlled Dangerous Substances

The federal Drug Enforcement Agency has [temporarily suspended restrictions](#) on using telehealth to prescribe controlled dangerous substances (CDS). Prescribers may now prescribe CDS without an in-person visit for new and established patients if all other state and federal rules are met.

Under HB 448/SB 402, health care practitioners are prohibited from using telehealth to prescribe opioids on schedule II for pain. There are exceptions for health care practitioners in institutions such as hospitals and hospice.

STEPS TO IMPLEMENT TELEDENTISTRY

1. Identify a communication platform to use
2. Integrate the platform into your clinic's current workflow
3. Train your staff on platform and procedures
4. Have resources ready for patients, including instructions how to use specific technology, and/or language interpretation services
5. [Inform patients](#) about the availability of teledentistry (i.e. update website/social media with teledentistry information, call patients, and/or send notification e-mail to all patients)
6. Remind patients and staff that teledentistry is not definitive care, but an enhancement of person-to-person care
7. Evaluate how teledentistry is meeting patient needs, modify practice, evaluate again
8. Identify additional region-specific resources to share with patients who may have other health needs (i.e. food banks, housing resources, mental health resources, etc.)

Source: Virginia Health Catalyst

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR USING TELEDENTISTRY DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Standard of Care

It is important for providers to have a complete picture of the patient's overall health when providing care to a new or established patient via teledentistry. Providers should obtain an accurate, recent health history, history of the patient's current complaint, and any possible visual aids from the patient (e.g., a photograph of the area of concern). Patients should complete new patient registration forms to the best of their abilities and submit insurance and/or payment information, HIPAA notifications, any

modifiers that are being utilized during this pandemic, consent for treatment with an understanding that care provided via teledentistry is likely not definitive, and other relevant documentation.

Plan for Minimum Interactions (should an in-person visit become necessary)

Providers need to plan for efficient in-person emergency visits to effectively manage the patient's major concerns and minimize the time spent in the dental office. Have all information, explanations, payments, consent, etc. exchanged or completed prior to the patient's arrival at the dental office.

How to Engage Non-emergent Dental Patients

Teledentistry is a useful tool to continue dental care and manage oral health goals with all patients during a crisis. It is important to support patients during self-quarantine so providers are prepared to welcome them back when restrictions are lifted. Here are a few easy ways to engage patients:

- Discuss "at home" strategies with patients (i.e. ways to improve at home cleaning, prescription toothpaste, dietary changes, germ control).
- Help identify the patient's values and goals through [motivational interviewing](#). Help patients develop self-management goals to work towards total health.
- Ask patients about their overall physical and mental health. Be prepared to share additional resources to support your patient's total health and connect them with social support services (i.e. food banks, housing support, mental health counseling)

Be respectful if oral hygiene/oral care is not a patient's top priority. Patients may be dealing with recent unemployment, child care challenges, or illness (either their own or a loved one). Remind patients that their providers are still available via phone or secure video to discuss any concerns, answer home care questions, etc.

TELEDENTISTRY DOS AND DON'TS FOR ORAL HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS

Do engage with your patients regularly, even if you cannot provide in-person care at this time. This can include a "dental wellness check" and the opportunity to discuss at-home care strategies.

Do have resources available for your patients, including guides on how to communicate via teledentistry and at-home care strategies to maintain their oral health.

Do respect your patient's decision to not prioritize their oral health at this time. It is important to remind your patient you are present and available when they are ready to return to care.

Do confirm your patient's identity, whether a new patient or established patient, before commencing teledentistry services.

Do not utilize a third party non-HIPAA compliant platform without informing your patients of the risks associated with this mode of communication.

Do collect all necessary information before providing consultation and or prescriptions, including a complete health history, history of the patient's chief complaint, necessary visuals of the chief complaint area, and informed consent to provide care via teledentistry.

Do remember to document all findings, discussion, images shared, etc. This is still a service you provided to your patient and must be included in his/her dental record.

Do use Skygen and MCO guidelines to appropriately code care provided.

Do remember to follow up with your patients. As the care provided through teledentistry will likely not be definitive, a virtual follow up or subsequent scheduling of in-person treatment may be required.

Do not provide any service outside your scope of practice.

Do connect your patient with other community services that may be helpful, such as local food banks, mental health resources, etc.

Source: Virginia Health Catalyst

TELEDENTISTRY RESOURCES

What is teledentistry?

- [Facts About Teledentistry](#)
- [Teledental Practice and Teledental Encounters](#)
- [Applications of Teledentistry: A Literature Review and Update](#)

Improving access to care

- [Teledentistry: How Technology Can Facilitate Access To Care](#)
- [Teledentistry: Providing Access to Care During the COVID-19 Crisis](#)
- [Virtual Visits/Teledentistry Documentation Recommendations](#)
- [Using Teledentistry to Maintain Services and Contact with Patients During the time of COVID-19 Physical Distancing](#)
- [Increasing Access to Care through Teledentistry: A NNOHA Promising Practice](#)
- [Implementing a Pediatric Teledentistry Program](#)
- [Case Studies of 6 Teledentistry Programs: Strategies to Increase Access to General and Specialty Dental Services](#)
- [Expanding Oral Health: Teledentistry](#)

Implementation

- [Guidance Document for Patient Assessment via Synchronous Teledentistry](#)
- [Implementing a Pediatric Teledentistry Program](#)
- [Video-teleconferencing and Cybersecurity during COVID-19](#)
- [How to Obtain Consent for Telehealth](#)
- [Easy-to-Understand Telehealth Consent Form](#)
- [Welcome to Teledentistry: Bringing Patient-Centered Care into the Synchronous Teledental Emergency Visit](#)
- [Welcome to Teledentistry: Bringing Patient-Centered Care Into the Synchronous Teledental Emergency Visit Using a New Approach, the Share Framework \(video\)](#)

Maryland State guidance

- [Maryland Department of Health Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) Outbreak](#)
- [Maryland Department of Health Federal Public Health Emergency Extension and Provider Impact Statement](#)
- [Maryland Department of Health Office of Oral Health](#)
- [Telehealth and Dentistry – Senate Bill 402 and House Bill 448 Now in Effect](#)
- [Maryland Medicaid Telehealth Dentistry Guidance](#)

Billing and coding

- [Maryland Medicaid Telehealth Dentistry Guidance](#)
- [ADA COVID-19 Billing and Coding Guidance](#)

Readiness assessment

- [Maryland Telehealth Readiness Assessment Tool](#)

Medicaid:

- [Maryland Medicaid Telehealth Dentistry Guidance](#)

Medicare:

- [Medicare Telemedicine Healthcare Provider Fact Sheet](#)

Policy

- [Senate Bill 442/House Bill 448 Authorizing Use of Telehealth in Maryland](#)
- [ADA Policy on Teledentistry](#)
- [Improving Oral Health Using Telehealth-Connected Teams and the Virtual Dental Home System of Care: Program and Policy Considerations](#)
- [Nationwide Survey of Teledentistry Regulations](#)
- [Suggested Teledentistry Rules](#)

Webinars (recorded)

- [Teledentistry & Virtual Evaluations During COVID-19](#)
- [Teledentistry and Minimally Invasive Procedures in the Time of COVID-19](#)
- [Teledentistry: Providing Alternative Care During a Public Health Crisis](#)
- [Engaging Dental Providers in COVID-19 Response Efforts](#)
- [Practical Aspects and Examples of Teledentistry](#)
- [Teledentistry 101 & COVID-19 Limited Evaluations](#)
- [Telehealth and COVID-19](#)

- [Practical Aspects and Examples of Teledentistry](#)
- [AIDPH Teledentistry Listening Session: Responding to COVID-19](#)
- [Teledentistry: Closing Gaps in Oral Health](#)
- [Patient Assessment via Synchronous Teledentistry: Clinical Techniques Overview](#)
- [Teledentistry Options for COVID-19 Response](#)

Additional resources for providers:

- [Maryland Health Care Commission Telehealth Resource Center](#)
- [ADA Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Center for Dentists](#)
- [National Consortium of Telehealth Resource Centers](#)
- [National Network for Oral Health Access Teledentistry Resources](#)
- [National Consortium of Telehealth Resource Centers COVID-19 Telehealth Toolkit](#)
- [Guidance on Continuing to Practice Ethically during COVID-19](#)
- [Academy of General Dentistry Coronavirus Resource Page](#)
- [American Teledentistry Association](#)
- [COVID-19 Resources for Dental Providers](#)
- [DentaQuest Partnership Teledentistry Web Page](#)

Additional resources for the public

- [Frequently Asked Questions about Telehealth](#)
- [Self Care After a Teledentistry Appointment](#)

Adapted from Virginia Health Catalyst Clinical Advisory Board