



ForwardHealth Coverage of Telemedicine Services

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Coverage History

- **Fall 2004:** ForwardHealth begins coverage of certain mental health and substance abuse services provided via telemedicine.
- **July 2006:** ForwardHealth expands coverage of telemedicine to include office visits, consultations, and End Stage Renal Disease management services.



Current ForwardHealth Coverage

Services covered when provided via telemedicine:

- Outpatient mental health services
- Outpatient substance abuse services
- Health and behavior assessment and intervention
- Office visits
- Consultations
- End Stage Renal Disease management services



“Distant Site” Requirements

- **Distant Site:** Location of the rendering provider.
- Services must be rendered by one of the following provider types:
 - Physicians, physician assistants, nurse practitioners
 - Nurse midwives
 - Psychiatrists and Ph.D. psychologists



“Originating Site” Requirements

- **Originating Site:** Site at which the member is located.
- Must have the equipment and staffing necessary to facilitate a telemedicine service.
- Cannot be an emergency room.



Additional Requirements

Services must:

- Be of sufficient audio and visual fidelity and clarity as to be functionally equivalent to a face-to-face contact.
- Meet all applicable HIPAA confidentiality requirements.
- Be thoroughly documented in the member's medical record in the same way as if it were performed as a face-to-face service.



Reimbursement

- The rendering provider (“distant site”) is reimbursed the same rate for a telemedicine service as a face-to-face service.
- The facility at which the member is located (“originating site”) is reimbursed a facility fee.



Current ForwardHealth Coverage

Services not separately reimbursable as telemedicine:

- Telephone and email conversations between providers.
- Telephone and email conversations between providers and members.
- Store and Forward services.



Expenditures (Calendar Year 2013)

Service	Fee-For-Service (\$)	Managed Care (\$)	TOTAL (\$)
Office Visits	134,300	167,600	301,900
Mental Health Services	77,800	117,400	195,200
All Other	10,900	2,200	13,100
Facility Fee	174,100	163,400	337,500
TOTAL (\$)	397,100	450,600	847,700



Future Challenges

- Universal standards and definitions for telemedicine are still being developed.
- Some geographic areas continue to have low broadband internet access.
- Technology can change faster than the policy making process.



Future Opportunities

- Improve knowledge among providers of current telemedicine coverage.
- Monitor emerging telemedicine technology.
- Work with other state agencies to facilitate and enhance the use of telemedicine in Wisconsin.