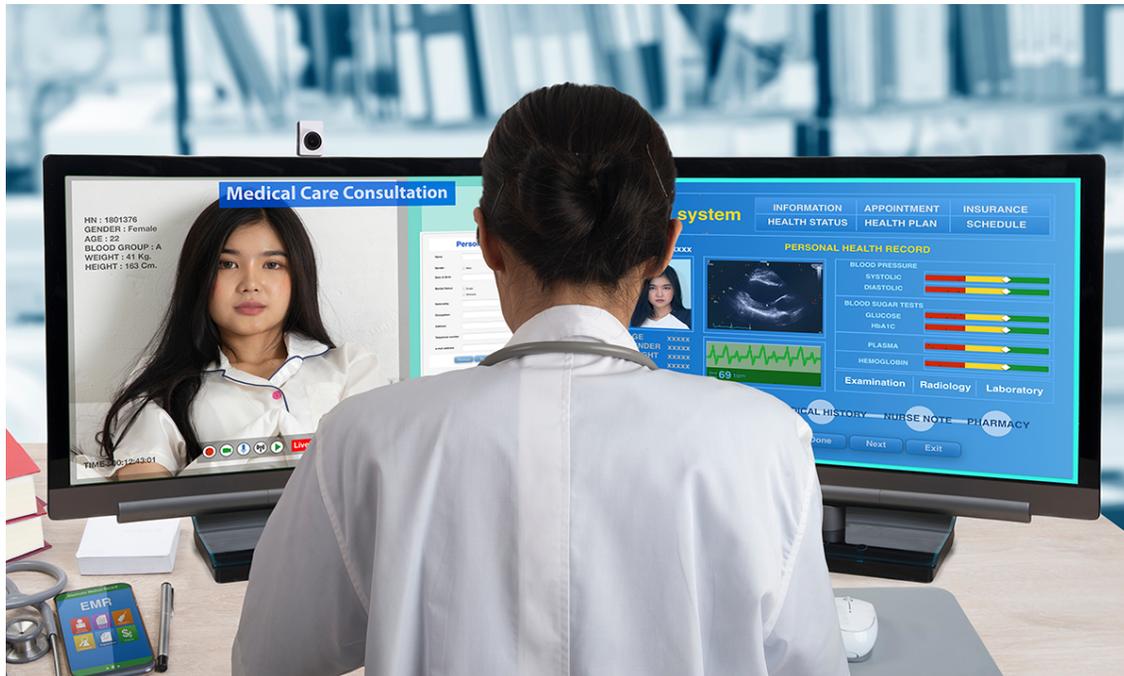


New Federal Law Extends Telemedicine Reimbursement



By Elizabeth Woodcock, MBA, FACMPE, CPC

Performing telemedicine in your practice is an operational challenge, but those challenges pale in comparison with the unknowns about its reimbursement in the long run. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, telemedicine was not on the radar for most medical practices, but today it's standard industry practice to offer services via telemedicine. However, questions remain about its future as reimbursement has been largely tied to the government's public health emergency (PHE) during the pandemic. While changing the law to establish permanency for telemedicine is a challenge amidst today's political agenda, the government has managed to bolster key elements of reimbursement – at least for the time being.

On March 15, President Biden signed the [Consolidated Appropriations Act \(CAA\) 2022](#) into law, allowing for these flexibilities related to Medicare reimbursement for 151 days after the PHE concludes:

- Services may be provided to Medicare patients at any location, including their home.
- Occupational and physical therapists will continue to be able to furnish and be reimbursed for telemedicine services; speech pathologists and audiologists are also included as eligible clinicians.
- Audio-only technology will continue to be permitted for office visits, and any other services not requiring the use of interactive, real-time equipment.
- Federally qualified health centers (FQHCs) and rural health clinics (RHCs) can continue to provide telemedicine services.

As of April 16, 2022, the current PHE has been extended for another 90 days. The law called for MedPAC, the independent advisors to Congress, to assess the issue of telemedicine reimbursement. In the spring of 2021, [MedPAC issued a report that reimbursement](#) should be rolled back to a pre-pandemic state, but consumer expectations have changed substantially since then.

If you have questions about telemedicine and reimbursements or your malpractice insurance coverage related to telemedicine, please don't hesitate to contact SVMIC at 800.342.2239 or ContactSVMIC@svmic.com. Members can also find further details on telemedicine and reimbursements on our [Vantage](#) portal.

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