

## Network Provider Update

To: Medi-Cal network participants  
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**Subject: All Plan Letter 23-007: Telehealth Services Policy**

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The Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) recently issued [All Plan Letter \(APL\) 23-007](#), "Telehealth Services Policy." We are sharing a summary of this APL with you to ensure you are aware of the information, and you can apply the information to your practice or facility operations, where appropriate.

APL 23-007 describes revisions to DHCS telehealth services policy, including which covered services may be delivered by telehealth and how those services should be managed.

### APL summary

- To provide covered services via telehealth, a provider must be licensed in the State of California and enrolled with Medi-Cal.
- The APL lists criteria for reimbursable services to be delivered via telehealth:
  - Services must be appropriate to be delivered via telehealth. The service should not require the in-person presence of the member.
  - The member must provide verbal or written consent to the use of telehealth prior to the initial delivery of services. Visit the [Patient Consent for Telehealth Services](#) web page to learn more.
  - Documentation must show that the services meet the definitions of the procedure codes associated with them.
  - Services must comply with all laws regarding confidentiality of and member rights to healthcare information.
- By January 1, 2024, all visits should be offered as in-person with face-to-face contact unless the member asks for a video-audio encounter. If the provider is unable to offer in-person services for a member who requests in-person services, the provider **MUST** arrange for a referral to an in-person provider.
- If a video-audio encounter is requested by the member it must be synchronous.
- Audio only visit\* encounters should be reserved for those members who cannot present in-person, do not have access to video capabilities and still request audio only.  
\*Please note that a telephone call from a provider to a patient is not necessarily the same as a "visit." The practice of medicine has always included the use of a telephone call to speak with patients for various reasons.
- As a part of obtaining written or verbal consent, providers must also explain the following to members:
  - The member's right to receive service in person instead of via telehealth

- That use of telehealth is voluntary and that they may withdraw consent for the use of telehealth at any time without affecting their ability to access Medi-Cal services in the future
- The availability of non-medical transportation to facilitate in-person visits
  - [Learn about transportation services](#)
- The potential limitations or risks related to receiving services through telehealth as compared to an in-person visit, if applicable
- The APL explains different ways providers may establish new patient relationships via telehealth.
  - All providers can establish new patients using synchronous video visits.
  - Providers may establish new patients using audio-only synchronous interaction if the visit relates to sensitive services, the member requests audio-only modality, or the member attests they do not have access to video.
  - FQHCs may establish new patients through an asynchronous store and forward modality if certain conditions are met.
- The APL also offers guidance for reimbursing providers for services delivered via telehealth.

This summary is only meant as a brief description of the APL. Please see the APL itself for additional background and the complete requirements. The full text of APL 23-007 may be found at this URL: <https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/formsandpubs/Documents/MMCDAPLsandPolicyLetters/APL2023/APL23-007.pdf> (Links to the DHCS.ca.gov website will take you off of the Blue Shield Promise website.)

If you have questions about providing telehealth services to our members, please contact Provider Services via Live Chat after logging in at [blueshieldca.com/provider](https://blueshieldca.com/provider) or call (800) 468-9935 from 6 a.m. to 6:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.