

## LEGAL FACT SHEET

### Using Telemental Health Services

#### What are Telemental Health Services?

During the time of the declared National disaster, programs licensed and designated by OMH (Office of Mental Health) will still be able to provide services for individuals, from the comfort and safety of their own home. This will allow people to access clinical psychiatric services and care by interacting with a mental health professional. This will allow clients of mental health services to be able to maintain therapeutic services despite not being able to meet with a practitioner in person.

Telemental health, which typically includes Medicaid-reimbursable services, will now also include services by telephone or video.

Telemedicine will be able to effectively assist children and adults in the community. NYS will be able to provide Medicaid services via/telephone or video to provide community based and home-based services. Health home face to face contacts that are typically required, are currently waived. Medicaid will provide telephone evaluation and management services for cases where face to face visits isn't recommended. Places that are still open that provide outpatient or community-based services in NYS are to follow the pre-screening questions below before proceeding to schedule to ensure safety. See Telemedicine Fact Sheet.

A regulation adopted on 3/17/2020 states that insurance companies are to provide telehealth services at zero cost for New York consumers. This not only applies for COVID-19, it also includes any other covered health care services including mental health and substance use disorder treatment needed, which provides access to quality, affordable care from home.

#### Types of Telemental Services

Most Telemental Health providers offer medical services related to Behavioral/Mental health services. Examples of symptoms that a Telemental service provider can assist with or diagnose include:

Telemental Health services often include help with:

- Mental Health Counseling
- Medication Management
- Crisis Counseling
- Pre and Post hospitalization evaluations
- Consultations
- Mental Health Assessments
- Intake and Mental Health Diagnosis
- Psychoeducation
- Support
- Substance Abuse Disorders

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### Who Qualifies for Telemental Health Services?

Eligibility is based on age, income, and other factors.

Eligibility covers people who are already receiving mental health/community services where the agency is closed. Prior to face-to-face activities a professional will speak with the client over the phone and conduct the pre-screening assessment. If a person screens positive in response to any of the questions they will be able to receive Telemental services. Typically, there is a written approval process for telemental health services, but in this state of emergency this will be waived.

### How to Access Telemental Health Services

You can apply for coverage through NY State of Health:

- Online at <https://nystateofhealth.ny.gov/>
- By phone at 855-355-5777, working with enrollment assistors.

Telemental health services are widely available across the NYS. If you are interested in utilizing Telemental health services, here are some steps to contact services to see if you are eligible:

1. **If you are employed**, check with your employer to see if your benefits package includes a particular Telemental Health provider. Some employers work directly with Telemental Health providers to offer free services for their employees.
2. **If you are insured**, check with your insurance provider to see if there are any telemental health service providers who are covered under your plan. In recent days, many insurance providers, including Medicaid providers around the state, have contracted with specific telemedicine providers that will be covered under insurance. Individuals who are eligible for other NY State of Health programs – Medicaid, Essential Plan and Child Health Plus can enroll throughout the entire year.
3. **If you don't have insurance, or your insurance doesn't cover a specific telemental health provider**, York State Department of Financial Services (DFS), announced that New Yorkers will make a Special Enrollment Period available to New Yorkers during which **eligible individuals** will be able to enroll in insurance coverage through NY State of Health, New York's official health plan Marketplace, and directly through insurers. Individuals who enroll in Qualified Health Plans through NY State of Health or directly through insurers between March 16 and April 15, 2020 will have coverage effective starting April 1, 2020.

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### Additional Information on Accessing Insurance to obtain Telemental Health Services

Individuals who enroll in Qualified Health Plans through NY State of Health or directly through insurers between March 16 and April 15, 2020, will have coverage effective starting April 1, 2020.

Individuals who are eligible for other NY State of Health programs – Medicaid, Essential Plan and Child Health Plus – can enroll throughout the entire year.

- **Eligibility table for individuals who don't qualify for Medicaid or child-health plus:**
  - <https://info.nystateofhealth.ny.gov/sites/default/files/Essential%20Plan%20Fact%20Sheet%20-%20English.pdf>
- **Chart to see if an adult is eligible to receive Medicaid:**
  - [https://www.health.ny.gov/health\\_care/medicaid/#trusts](https://www.health.ny.gov/health_care/medicaid/#trusts)
- **Chart to see if a child or children are eligible for Child Health Plus:**
  - [https://www.health.ny.gov/health\\_care/child\\_health\\_plus/eligibility\\_and\\_cost.htm](https://www.health.ny.gov/health_care/child_health_plus/eligibility_and_cost.htm)

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