Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)
Teledentistry FAQs for Medi-Cal Dental Providers

For the duration of the statewide COVID-19 shelter-in-place order, Medi-Cal dental providers equipped to do so are encouraged to use teledentistry as an alternate modality for the provision of select dental services.

What is teledentistry?
Telehealth refers to a broad variety of technologies and tactics to deliver virtual medical, health, and education services. Telehealth is not a specific service, but a collection of means to enhance care and educational delivery. Teledentistry refers to the use of telehealth systems and methodologies in dentistry. Teledentistry can include patient care delivery using, but not limited to, the following modalities:

- **Live video (synchronous):** Live, two-way interaction between a person (patient, caregiver, or provider) and a provider using audiovisual telecommunications technology.

- **Store-and-forward (asynchronous):** Transmission of recorded health information (for example, radiographs and photographs of patients) through a secure electronic communications system to a provider, who uses the information to evaluate a patient’s condition or render a service outside of a real-time or live interaction.

Under Medi-Cal Dental, who can perform teledentistry?
Medi-Cal enrolled dentists and allied dental professionals (under the supervision of a dentist) may render limited services via synchronous/live transmission teledentistry, so long as such services are within their scope of practice.

Can I use my smart-phone or a video conferencing service like Skype?
Yes. Telephones, tablets, laptops, and personal computers that have audio and video capabilities are appropriate for virtual evaluations. For more information on Health Insurance Portability and Protection Act (HIPAA) compliance guidelines, please visit the U.S. Health and Human Services (HHS) website [here](https://www.hhs.gov).

Has the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) made any exceptions for teledentistry during the COVID-19 pandemic?
Yes. As announced in Provider Bulletin [Volume 36, Number 10](https://dental.dhcs.ca.gov), effective March 25, 2020, DHCS will allow a temporary teledentistry exception for consultation services by telephone or video to be provided to remote Medi-Cal members. This policy will be in effect until...
further notice. In utilizing this temporary flexibility, enrolled Medi-Cal dental providers should follow the guidelines below:

- **Current Dental Terminology (CDT) code D9430**: Used for live streaming video or telephone with a Medi-Cal patient with oral health issues in lieu of an in-person office visit. Providers would be reimbursed the Schedule of Maximum Allowances (SMA) rate for CDT code D9430, in addition to the teledentistry payment for CDT code D9999 (code D9995 after May 16, 2020).

- Documentation of the consultation should be noted on the claim document in the comments section. For example:
  - Patient is having discomfort
  - Patient has a concern that was to be discussed at the recall appointment - but that appointment has now been postponed due to COVID-19.

- CDT code D9430 would only be allowed for an actual conversation between the Medi-Cal member and the Medi-Cal provider about oral health issues as their chief complaint.

- CDT code D9430 should not be billed for conversations with office staff about scheduling or rescheduling appointments.

**What teledentistry procedures can I perform?**

**Live Video (Synchronous)**
Limited Medi-Cal dental services may be rendered via synchronous/live transmission (live video) teledentistry when billing CDT code D9999 (and procedure D0999) for dates of service on or before May 15, 2020. For dates of service on or after May 16, 2020, CDT code D9999 will be replaced with CDT code D9995, which can be billed as a standalone synchronous teledentistry procedure code. The following is Medi-Cal’s teledentistry policy for synchronous/live transmissions:

- CDT code D9999 is reimbursed at 24 cents per minute, up to a maximum of 90 minutes, i.e., up to $21.60 maximum reimbursement. CDT code D9999 may only be used once per date of service per beneficiary, per provider. As noted above, CDT code D9999 will be replaced with CDT code D9995, as of May 16, 2020.

- When billing CDT code D0999 for teledentistry, providers should identify that D0999 is being billed as a teledentistry claim. Please refer to this [teledentistry tutorial](#) for details.

**Store-and-Forward (Asynchronous)**
Limited Medi-Cal dental services may be rendered via asynchronous store-and-forward using CDT code D9996, which identifies the services as teledentistry. CDT code D9996
is not reimbursable; instead, the billing dental provider would be reimbursed based upon the applicable CDT procedure code to be paid according to the Schedule of Maximum Allowance (SMA). The following CDT codes may be billed under Medi-Cal’s teledentistry policy for asynchronous store and forward:

- D0120: Periodic oral evaluation — established patient
- D0150: Comprehensive oral evaluation - new or established patient
- D0210: Intraoral — complete series of radiographic images
- D0220: Intraoral — periapical first radiographic image
- D0230: Intraoral — periapical each additional radiographic image
- D0240: Intraoral — occlusal radiographic image
- D0270: Bitewing — single radiographic image
- D0272: Bitewings — two radiographic images
- D0274: Bitewings — four radiographic images
- D0330: Panoramic radiographic image
- D0350: Oral/Facial photographic images

Should I bill the American Dental Association (ADA) recommended codes recently put forth in the ADA’s teledentistry guidance?

No. Medi-Cal dental providers may only bill CDT codes D9999, D0999, and D9430 (effective March 25, 2020) for synchronous/live transmission (live video) teledentistry. As noted above, CDT code D9995 will replace CDT codes D9999 and D0999 after May 16, 2020.

Is there specific teledentistry guidance for Safety Net Clinics?

Yes. Safety Net Clinics (Federally Qualified Health Centers, Rural Health Clinics, Tribal 638 Clinics) should refer to the telehealth billing guidance released by DHCS on March 24, 2020.

Where can I find more information about Medi-Cal Dental’s teledentistry policy?

For more information about Medi-Cal Dental’s teledentistry and billing for teledentistry guidelines, please refer to the Provider Handbook Section 4 -Treating Beneficiaries, pages 4-14 and 4-15. Teledentistry resources can also be found on the Medi-Cal Dental website here.