

TELEDENTISTRY EXPANSION FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

1. *What is Teledentistry?*

Teledentistry is a modality for dental providers to render dental services to members by using communication technologies to facilitate the encounter. Dental services can include diagnosis, consultation, treatment, education, care management, and/or self-management of a member's dental care needs while at a different location than the provider. Teledentistry can include patient care delivery using the following Current Dental Terminology (CDT) codes:

- D9995 - Real-time encounter (synchronous): Live, two-way interaction between a member (originating site) and a provider (distant site).
- D9996 - Information stored and forwarded to a dentist for subsequent review (asynchronous). The dentist receives the records and uses the information to evaluate the member's condition or render a service outside of a real-time or live interaction.

2. *What is Teledentistry Expansion?*

The Medi-Cal Dental Program has expanded its teledentistry policy to allow Medi-Cal Dental Fee-for-Service (FFS) providers and Dental Managed Care (DMC) providers the ability to establish new patient relationships through an asynchronous store and forward modality, consistent with Federally Qualified Health Center/Rural Health Clinic (FQHC/RHC) providers. Additionally, DHCS enables providers the flexibility to use teledentistry as a modality to render appropriate services within the diagnostic and preventive service categories.

3. *What are the requirements with Teledentistry Expansion?*

Providers have the flexibility to use teledentistry as a modality when in compliance with ALL of the following requirements:

- The procedure is a diagnostic (D0100-D0999) or preventive (D1000-D1999) service. Teledentistry is not allowable for any other service categories and CDT codes (D2000- D9999) except D9995 and D9996, which are the teledentistry modality codes; and D9430 office visit for observation (during regularly scheduled hours – no other services performed), which can only be rendered through Synchronous Teledentistry (D9995).
- Dental providers billing for services delivered via teledentistry must be enrolled as Medi-Cal Dental providers. Dental providers rendering Medi-Cal covered benefits or services via a teledentistry modality must be licensed in California, enrolled as Medi-Cal Dental rendering providers,

operate within their allowable scope of practice, and meet applicable standards of care.

- All services rendered through teledentistry must be in compliance with the Manual of Criteria (MOC), including documentation requirements to substantiate the corresponding technical and professional components of billed CDT codes.
- A patient who receives teledentistry services under these provisions shall also have the ability to receive in-person services from the dentist or dental practice or assistance in arranging a referral for in-person services.
- Procedure does not require in-person presence of the patient in a dental facility.

4. Under Medi-Cal Dental, who can perform teledentistry?

Medi-Cal enrolled dentists and allied dental professionals (within their scope of practice) may render limited services via synchronous/live transmission teledentistry.

5. Can I use my smart-phone or a video conferencing service like Skype, Zoom, Teams to access teledentistry?

Yes. Telephones, tablets, laptops, and personal computers that have audio or 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 – <https://www.hhs.gov/hipaa/index.html>.

6. What procedures are allowable with teledentistry?

Providers can bill for services in the Diagnostic (D0100-D0999) and Preventive (D1000- D1999) categories when utilizing Teledentistry as a modality. Teledentistry is NOT allowable for all other service categories and CDT codes (D2000-D9999) except D9995 and D9996, which are the teledentistry modality codes and D9430, which can only be rendered through Synchronous Teledentistry (D9995).

7. What are the criteria for the Teledentistry codes D9995 and D9996? D9995:

Synchronous or Live Transmission

As part of the CDT-19 update, teledentistry CDT code D9995 (Teledentistry-Synchronous; Real-Time Encounter) replaced CDT code D9999 (and D0999). For Medi-Cal dental benefits or services, Medi-Cal enrolled dentists and allied dental professionals may render limited services via synchronous/live transmission teledentistry, so long as such services are within their scope of practice, when billed using CDT code D9995 for dates of service on or after May

16, 2020. CDT code D9995 can be billed as a standalone synchronous teledentistry procedure code. The following is Medi-Cal's teledentistry policy for synchronous/live transmissions:

- CDT code D9995 is a per-minute, \$.24/minute procedure payable up to 90 minutes.
- CDT code D9995 is for synchronous encounters, meaning any telephone call or video call/chat, teledentistry encounter.
- CDT code D9995 is for Medi-Cal patient-initiated contact with a Medi-Cal dental provider. This code is not for:
 1. Dental assistant time
 2. Dental hygienist time
 3. Provider-initiated calls to the patient
 4. Time spent contacting pharmacies on a patient's behalf

CDT code D9995 should be billed with the number of minutes noted in the "Quantity" field of the claim, or the documentation should clearly state the number of minutes being requested.

D9996: Asynchronous Store and Forward

Limited Medi-Cal dental services may be rendered via asynchronous store-and-forward using CDT code D9996 (Teledentistry – Asynchronous; Information stored and forwarded to dentist for subsequent review). 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 SMA. Appropriate Diagnostic (D0100-D0999) or Preventive (D1000-D1999) CDT codes may be billed under Medi-Cal's teledentistry policy for asynchronous store and forward.

8. Do I need to submit photographs with a teledentistry claim?

Photographs do not need to be submitted with a teledentistry claim. In the Medi-Cal Dental Program, photographs are used for the diagnosis and treatment of the specific clinical condition of the patient that is not readily apparent on radiographs. Photographs should be submitted with the claim or Treatment Authorization Request (TAR) for the procedure it supports."

9. Can I submit a teledentistry claim for a call that I initiate?

No. Claims for synchronous/live transmission (live video) teledentistry are payable only if the Medi-Cal member initiates the call.

10. Can I submit a teledentistry claim for time spent calling a Medi-Cal member's prescription into a pharmacy?

No. Teledentistry is only for interactions between a member and dental provider for dental services. Therefore, teledentistry claims submitted for calls to a pharmacy will be denied.

11. *Is there specific teledentistry guidance for Safety Net Clinics?*

Yes. The originating site and transmission fee and billing rules are not applicable to Safety Net Clinics (Federally Qualified Health Centers, Rural Health Clinics, or Indian Health Services Memorandum of Agreement 683 Clinics). For policy and billing information specific to Safety Net Clinics, please refer to those sections of the Medi-Cal Provider Manual ([Rural and Ind Health](#)) – [Medi-Cal Dental Provider Handbook Section 4](#).

12. *Where can I find more information about Medi-Cal Dental's teledentistry policy?*

For more information about Medi-Cal Dental's teledentistry policies and billing in accordance with teledentistry guidelines, please refer to the Provider Handbook Section 4 -Treating Members. Teledentistry resources can also be found on the Medi-Cal Dental website - https://www.dental.dhcs.ca.gov/Providers/Medi_Cal_Dental/Provider_Publications/ProviderHandbook