

BULLETIN

TELEPHONE OFFICE VISITS (Update)

In light of the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, the Office of Workers' Compensation Administration (OWCA) at the Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC) is providing this bulletin to ensure that workers' compensation carriers, both domestic and foreign, are aware that the existing Louisiana Medical Fee Reimbursement Schedule currently has three Non Face-to-Face CPT codes that can be used by physicians to bill for telephone office visits, to-wit:

CPT 99441, 99442 and 99443

These codes may be used when a physician provides telephone evaluation or maintenance (E/M) service to an established patient, parent, or guardian not originating from a related E/M service provided within the previous 7 days nor leading to an E/M service or procedure within the next 24 hours or soonest available appointment. The above-referenced codes allow the physician to bill for telephone services that last from 5 -10 minutes, 11 - 20 minutes or 21 - 30 minutes, respectively.

There are also three Non Face-to-face CPT codes that can be used by non-physicians to bill for telephone office visits, to-wit:

CPT 98966, 98967 and 98968

These codes may be used for telephone assessment and management service provided by a qualified non-physician health care professional to an established client, parent or guardian. The above-referenced codes allow the non-physician health care professional to bill for telephone services that last from 5 -10 minutes, 11 - 20 minutes or 21 - 30 minutes, respectively.

During this perilous time, the OWCA encourages the use of these codes to improve the health of injured workers, to help those who need routine care and to keep vulnerable patients with mild symptoms in their homes while maintaining access to the care they need. **Use of these codes do NOT negate use of other CPT codes which currently exist in the Medical Fee Reimbursement Schedule, L.A.C. Title 40, or any current Emergency Rule, establishing new CPT codes, where applicable.** Limiting community spread of the virus, as well as limiting the exposure to other patients and staff members will slow viral spread of COVID-19. Therefore, the remote provision of services, including care unrelated to COVID-19 will promote, protect and safeguard the public health, safety and welfare of the injured workers of this state and others and is in keeping with Governor John Bel Edwards' Stay At Home order, 33 JBE 2020 of March 22, 2020.

The HHS Office for Civil Rights (OCR) will exercise enforcement discretion and waive penalties for HIPAA violations against health care providers that serve patients in good faith through everyday communications technologies, during the COVID-19 nationwide public health emergency. For more information see, <https://www.hhs.gov/hipaa/for-professionals/special-topics/emergency-preparedness/index.html> Therefore, a carrier not specifically set up for telephone evaluation and maintenance should not be overly concerned with violations of the HIPAA provisions, during this time.

**""Sheral C. Kellar, Assistant Secretary
Office of Workers' Compensation Administration**