

A decorative graphic consisting of a series of overlapping, curved bands in shades of red, orange, and yellow, resembling a stylized wave or a rising sun, spans the width of the page above the main title.

PRACTICE ALERT

MEDICARE TELEHEALTH PSYCHIATRIC CPT® CODES USED BY CLINICAL SOCIAL WORKERS

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With the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) has temporarily expanded its telehealth policies on an emergency basis under the 1135 waiver authority and the Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act. During the waiver period which began March 6, 2020, cost-sharing may be reduced or waived and clinical social workers (CSWs) may seek reimbursement for telehealth psychotherapy services furnished via telehealth to patients whether they are in their home or in an outpatient setting such as an office, assisted living facility, or nursing home. For telehealth services, CSWs will also be reimbursed at the same rate as an in-person service.

The most common type of service that CSWs in independent practice will provide under the 1135 waiver is for **“Medicare Telehealth Visits”** which require a real-time interactive audio and video telecommunication system. Audio-only technology, such as landlines, is not currently reimbursable. NASW is advocating for this to become allowable.

During the emergency waiver period, the telehealth visits may be

- Used for new and existing patients and families
- Conducted via smartphones, such as Apple Face-Time and Skype (in addition to video-conferencing platforms).

Below is a list of psychiatric CPT and other codes that Medicare may reimburse for telehealth psychiatric services when properly billed. These codes are used to seek reimbursement using the CMS-1500 form or its electronic counterpart. Because third-party payers may reimburse

psychiatric codes at their discretion, it is important for CSWs to verify the Medicare code list with all third-party payers with whom they are credentialed.

Medicare Psychiatric CPT Codes Used for Telehealth Services

Code Number	Description	Time Value
90832	Psychotherapy	30 minutes with patient
90834	Psychotherapy	45 minutes with patient
90837	Psychotherapy	60 minutes with patient
90839	Crisis Psychotherapy	First 60 minutes
90840	Crisis Psychotherapy	Each additional 30 minutes
90845	Psychoanalysis	None
90847	Family Psychotherapy With patient	50 minutes
90791	Psychiatric Evaluation	None
90785	Interactive Complexity	None

Additional information about telehealth services is available at <https://www.socialworkers.org/Practice/Infectious-Diseases/Coronavirus/Telehealth> and <https://www.cms.gov/newsroom/fact-sheets/medicare-telemedicine-health-care-provider-fact-sheet>

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