Telehealth: Scope; growth

- Electronic and telecommunications technologies in long-distance clinical health care, patient & professional education, public health.
- Internet, videoconferencing, store-and-forward imaging, streaming media, wireless, mobile devices, sensors
- 18.5% annual US growth through 2018
Medicare-Covered Practitioners/Physicians

- Physicians
- Physician assistants; Nurse practitioners NP
- Nurse midwives; Clinical nurse specialists
- Clinical psychologists & social workers (but not psychotherapy that includes medical and management services under Medicare)
- Registered dieticians; nutrition professionals
- PT, OT, Speech therapists NOT INCLUDED

Medicare: Rural or Med’l Underserved Areas

- Office of a physician or practitioner
- Hospitals; Critical Access Hospitals
- Hospital or CAH-based Renal Dialysis Centers (including satellites)
- Community Mental Health Centers
- Rural Health Clinics;
- Skilled Nursing Facilities; Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC);
Coverage 2015 Expansion

- Annual wellness visits
- Psychotherapy services
- Prolonged services in the office
- Chronic care patient management

CPT Code 99490 [not a telehealth code] but no direct payment for data collection


Existing Medicare Coverage

- Telehealth consultations, emergency department or initial inpatient
- Follow-up inpatient telehealth consultations furnished to beneficiaries in hospitals or SNFs
- Office or other outpatient visits
- Subsequent hospital care services, limited to 1 telehealth visit q 3 days
Medicare Coverage, cont.

- Individual and group health and behavior assessment and intervention
- Individual psychotherapy, Pharmacologic management, and Psychiatric diagnostic interview examination
- Individual and group Kidney Disease Education (KDE) services;

CPT Codes 99495 and 99496
Communication with patient or caregiver within 2 days of discharge. Medical decision making of moderate or high complexity and face to face visit within 14 days or 7 days [high complexity] of discharge. Telehealth OK for face to face visit.
**Medicare Coverage, cont.**

- Individual and group Diabetes Self-Management Training (DSMT)
- Group Medical Nutrition Therapy (MNT) services;
- Smoking cessation; substance abuse; obesity assessment and counseling
- Medicare Benefit Policy Manual (Pub 100-2) Chap 15, Section 270

**Reimbursement Efforts**

- Chronic care management to be used with chronic care monitoring devices
- Critical care and evaluation, with physician “visualization” by telehealth
- Video visits for home kidney dialysis
- CHF and COPD monitoring codes to match re-hospitalization avoidance
- ACO and bundled services authorized
Transitional Care Management

- Trendwatch, American Hospital Association, January 2015
- “The Promise of Telehealth for Hospitals, Health Systems and Their Communities”

Barriers: Home Telehealth

Telehealth services to the home not Medicare reimbursed. Hospice 3d period “face to face” = no telehealth

Medicaid telehealth in only 22 States+DC at same $ level as in-person

Provider funded; grant funded; ACA funding; private insurance pilots have shown for chronic care management:

↓ ER, re-hospitalizations
Outcomes Equivalent or Better; Cost Lower [sometimes]

- “Telehealth Program for Medicaid Patients with Type 2 Diabetes Lowers Hemoglobin A1c”, Kelly D. Stamp, PhD, ANP-C; Nancy A. Allen, PhD, ANP-BC; Susan Lehrer, RN, BSN, CDE; Sofija E. Zagarins, PhD; Gary Welch, PhD, *Journal of Managed Care Medicine*, Vol 15, No.4, 2012

- **“Can Telemonitoring Reduce Hospitalization and Cost of Care? A Health Plan’s Experience in Managing Patients with Heart Failure”** Daniel D. Maeng, PhD, Alison E. Starr, DBA, Janet F. Tomcavage, RN, MSN, Joann Scandra, RN, BSN, CCM, Doreen Salek, BS RN, and David Griffith, BS, *Population Health Management*, 2014

- “Telehealth and Hospitalizations for Medicare Home Healthcare Patients”, Hsueh-Fen Chen, PhD; M. Christine Kalish, MBA, CMPE; and José A. Pagán, PhD, *Telehealth and Hospitalizations*, June 2011

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**Geisinger Telehealth Study**

- ↓ hospitalization (23%) and re-hospitalization (44%), 11% cost savings on 541 patients…compared to complex care management alone

- $2.8+ million savings; 3:1 program ROI

- minimum of 70 months of claims

- AMC telehealth management company
Medicare Advantage Plans

- CMS permits Medicare Advantage programs to expand usage through telehealth, as an added service
- Health Professional Shortage area within rural areas are always covered for Primary, Dental or Mental Health professionals

VA Rapidly Expanding Health Outreach

- By end 2014, 690,000 on telehealth, 12% of Vets enrolled for healthcare.
- PTSD; mental and behavioral concerns of wounded warriors. Local centers & distanced specialists.
- Internet-based programs along with Skype-type live sessions
- Increased home-based video consults, e-consults and teleradiology programs
Federal Legislation 2015

- “Advancing Telehealth Opportunities in Medicare” bill, Congressional workgroup= increased telehealth if
  - 1. can show unmet health needs
  - 2. does not increase Medicare cost overall
  - 3. CMS actuary: no net $ increase

Veterans' Access to Care through Choice, Accountability, and Transparency Act

became Public Law 113-146 on 8/7/2014
State Legislative Examples

- NY State Senate Bill 7852, signed by Gov. Cuomo on December 29 2014, requires insurance parity: insurers and Medicaid, the same for in-person covered services and with telehealth and telemedicine technology.
- GA and TX: in-person first for Rx
- Florida Telehealth Workgroup efforts

American Telemedicine Assn.

- ATA resources include an all-State Analysis of telehealth coverage and reimbursement gaps & regulatory activities; and Report of licensure and practice scope barriers of practitioners.
- http://www.americantelemed.org/policy/state-telemedicine-policy#.VMRwr_7F9ic
Employers and Insurers now encouraging telehealth use

- 21 States require private insurers to pay for telehealth, as of Jan. 2015
- Some large insurers rolling out telehealth in zones
- Insurers using their own employee workforce as “beta” sites
- ATA monthly webinar tracking state-based coverage

Insurers and Employers

- LiveHealth on-line Ohio/CA: Wellpoint
- BlueCross Blue Shield On-line Care Anywhere
- UnitedHealth Now Care
- Humana pilots
- Westinghouse, Home Depot coverage
Licensure / Scope of Practice

- Some States bar *physicians* from practicing via telehealth without a full or partial new M.D. license => quality; jurisdictional access as justification
- Some States license the entity which arranges for/participates in telehealth
- Expanding to the therapies Boards
- American Medical Assn. 2014 Policy

Telehealth Care Standards

- ATA has many practice guidelines in the field. Latest: Primary and Urgent Care, 12/14. [I was a Panel Member]
  
  www.americantelemed.org/resources/telemedicine-practice-guidelines

- ATA Credentialing On-line Direct-to-Consumer Telehealth Organizations