

Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, and Speech Therapy Services and related Durable Medical Equipment services - Medicaid

The 2-week comment period for the Physical Therapy (PT), Occupational Therapy (OT), and Speech Therapy (ST) Services and related Durable Medical Equipment (DME) services– Medicaid policy ended June 15, 2022. During this period, HHSC received multiple comments from stakeholders. A summary of comments relating to the proposed policy and HHSC's responses follow.

Policy Comment Responses

General Comments

General comments to the language of the draft version of the policy posted for public comment.

- 1. Comment:** Multiple commenters expressed support for the addition of telehealth in the draft policies related to Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, and Speech Therapy and related Durable Medical Equipment services.

Response: HHSC acknowledges these comments and appreciates the support for the draft policies.

- 2. Comment:** A commenter suggested allowing telehealth to be utilized for therapy services even when not in a pandemic.

Response: HHSC clarifies that the posted policy draft changes are intended for language updates to the TMPPM and will replace interim guidance beyond the Public Health Emergency.

Authorization Requirements

Requested modifications or comments to the language within the "Authorization Requirements" of the version posted for public comment.

- 3. Comment:** A commenter asked to clarify if the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation (TDLR) has permanently permitted speech therapy assistants to deliver services via telehealth.

Response: For the most updated information for speech therapy assistant licensure, please check with the Texas Department of Licensing and

Regulation (TDLR). HHSC provides guidance on Texas Medicaid benefits, whereas the TDLR will have the most updated information for licensure rules for those providers. HHSC providers are expected to deliver health-care items and services to Medicaid clients in full accordance with all applicable licensure requirements.

Exclusions

Requested modifications or comments to the language within the “Exclusions” of the version posted for public comment.

- 4. Comment:** Multiple commenters expressed support for telehealth services and commented on synchronous telephone (audio-only) services related to therapies in the interim guidance and in the policy draft.

Response: HHSC appreciates the support for the draft policy. In addition to in-person services, the language only outlines reimbursement by synchronous **audiovisual** technology. HHSC clarifies that neither the interim guidance nor the posted policy language for PT, OT and ST outlines reimbursement by synchronous telephone (audio-only) technology.

- 5. Comment:** A commenter proposed changes for reimbursable synchronous telephone (audio-only) therapy services. The commenter also noted the policy draft included language for the possible provision of audio-only services during a Declaration of State of Disaster.

Response: In response to the proposed changes, HHSC declines to make changes to allow reimbursement for PT, OT, or ST by synchronous telephone (audio-only) technology at this time. HHSC strives to remain current and responsive to the latest evidence-based, peer-reviewed, patient-centered research, and best-practices. If new evidence should become available on this topic, stakeholders are encouraged to submit a Topic Nomination Form through our HHSC Texas Medicaid Medical and Dental Policy webpage.

HHSC would like to clarify the preconditions of the Declaration of State of Disaster flexibility. The flexibility is triggered when (1) a Declaration of State of Disaster is effective for the area where the member is located, and (2) HHSC issues direction to providers that expands the list of reimbursable telemedicine or telehealth services, including the possible use of an audio-only delivery method.

- 6. Comment:** A commenter requested HHSC to allow for the billing of procedure codes 97760, 97761, and 97763 as telehealth services, which relate to prosthetics fitting and training.

Response: HHSC declines to add these procedure codes for telehealth service reimbursement. However, HHSC strives to remain current and responsive to the latest evidence-based, peer-reviewed, patient-centered research, and best-practices. If new evidence should become available on

this topic, stakeholders are encouraged to submit a Topic Nomination Form through our HHSC Texas Medicaid Medical and Dental Policy webpage.