

[N.M. Stat. § 59A-47-45.3.]

§ 59A-47-45.3. Coverage for telemedicine services: Nonprofit Health Care Plan Law

A. An individual or group health insurance policy, health care plan or certificate of health insurance delivered or issued for delivery in this state shall provide coverage for services provided via telemedicine to the same extent the health care plan covers the same services when those services are provided via in-person consultation or contact. A health care plan shall not impose any unique condition for coverage of services provided via telemedicine.

B. A health care plan shall not impose an originating-site restriction with respect to telemedicine services or distinguish between telemedicine services provided to patients in rural locations and those provided to patients in urban locations; provided that the provisions of this section shall not be construed to require coverage of an otherwise noncovered benefit.

C. A determination by a nonprofit health plan that health care services delivered through the use of telemedicine are not covered under the plan shall be subject to review and appeal pursuant to the Patient Protection Act.

D. The provisions of this section shall not apply in the event that federal law requires the state to make payments on behalf of enrollees to cover the costs of implementing this section.

E. Nothing in this section shall require a health care provider to be physically present with a patient at the originating site unless the consulting telemedicine provider deems it necessary.

F. A health care plan shall not limit coverage of services delivered via telemedicine only to those health care providers who are members of the health care plan provider network where no in-network provider is available and accessible, as availability and accessibility are defined in network adequacy standards issued by the superintendent.

G. A health care plan may charge a deductible, copayment or coinsurance for a health care service delivered via telemedicine if it does not exceed the deductible, copayment or coinsurance applicable to a service delivered via in-person consultation or contact.

H. A health care plan shall not impose any annual or lifetime dollar maximum on coverage for services delivered via telemedicine, other than an annual or lifetime dollar maximum that applies in the aggregate to all items and services covered under the health care plan, or impose upon any person receiving benefits pursuant to this section any copayment, coinsurance or deductible amounts, or any plan year, calendar year, lifetime or other durational benefit limitation or maximum for benefits or services, that is not equally imposed upon all terms and services covered under the health care plan.

I. A health care plan shall reimburse for health care services delivered via telemedicine on the same basis and at least the same rate that the carrier reimburses for comparable services delivered via in-person consultation or contact.

J. Telemedicine used to provide clinical services shall be encrypted and shall conform to state and federal privacy laws.

K. The provisions of this section shall not apply to an individual or group health care plan intended to supplement major medical group-type coverage, such as medicare supplement, long-term care, disability income, specified disease, accident-only, hospital indemnity or any other limited-benefit health insurance policy.

L. As used in this section:

- (1) “consulting telemedicine provider” means a health care provider that delivers telemedicine services from a location remote from an originating site;
- (2) “health care provider” means a duly licensed hospital or other licensed facility, physician or other health care professional authorized to furnish health care services within the scope of the professional's license;
- (3) “in real time” means occurring simultaneously, instantaneously or within seconds of an event so that there is little or no noticeable delay between two or more events;
- (4) “originating site” means a place at which a patient is physically located and receiving health care services via telemedicine;
- (5) “store-and-forward technology” means electronic information, imaging and communication, including interactive audio, video and data communication, that is transferred or recorded or otherwise stored for asynchronous use; and
- (6) “telemedicine” means the use of telecommunications and information technology to provide clinical health care from a distance. “Telemedicine” allows health care professionals to evaluate, diagnose and treat patients in remote locations using telecommunications and information technology in real time or asynchronously, including the use of interactive simultaneous audio and video or store-and-forward technology, or remote patient monitoring and telecommunications in order to deliver health care services to a site where the patient is located, along with the use of electronic media and health information. “Telemedicine” allows patients in remote locations to access medical expertise without travel.