

**To: AmeriHealth Caritas Louisiana Providers**

**Date: March 20, 2023**

**Subject: [Informational Bulletin 20-7](#): Telemedicine/Telehealth Facilitation of Outpatient Substance Use Disorder (OPSUD) Treatment Services during the COVID-19 Declared Emergency  
Revised March 16, 2023**

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**Informational Bulletins that summarize policies and/or procedures are intended for quick reference and are accurate on the date they are issued.**

**Telemedicine/Telehealth Facilitation of Outpatient Substance Use Disorder (OPSUD) Treatment Services during the COVID-19 Declared Emergency**

The Biden Administration announced the public health emergency is set to expire on **May 11, 2023**. Beginning **May 12, 2023**, the requirements in the Medicaid Behavioral Health Services Provider Manual will resume.

Licensed Mental Health Professionals (LMHP) may provide assessments, evaluations, individual psychotherapy, family psychotherapy and medication management within an intensive outpatient or outpatient substance use treatment setting, through telemedicine/telehealth; assessments and evaluations conducted by an LMHP through telehealth should include synchronous, interactive, real-time electronic communication comprising both audio and visual elements, unless clinically appropriate and based on documented member consent.

NOTE: Methadone admission visits conducted by the admitting physician within Opioid Treatment Programs are **not** allowed via telehealth.

The Medicaid Behavioral Health Services Provider Manual can be found at the following link: [https://www.lamedicaid.com/provweb1/providermanuals/BHS\\_main.htm](https://www.lamedicaid.com/provweb1/providermanuals/BHS_main.htm).

Provider responsibilities when providing services delivered through telehealth include:  
The provider shall deliver telehealth services in accordance with all state and federal laws, including the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) and any HIPAA related directives from the Office for Civil Rights at the Department of Health and Human

## Services.

- The provider shall deliver telehealth services in accordance with rules set forth by their respective professional licensing board and accepted standards of clinical practice.
- The provider shall maintain documentation for the services delivered through the use of telehealth and document the specific telehealth modality used.
- The provider shall use the appropriate procedure code, modifiers, and place of service codes.

Effective **May 12, 2023**- Psychological testing and group therapy provided by an LMHP shall be delivered through an in-person service delivery method, unless otherwise allowed per the Manual or subsequent LDH-issued notice.

When using telemedicine/telehealth, please review the new guideline:

Recipients may refuse services delivered through telehealth or request that services be delivered in-person. In these cases, the provider must provide an in-person service or refer to an equally qualified licensed practitioner.

### **Communication Requirements**

Effective **May 12, 2023**, services provided by an LMHP using telehealth must include a secure telecommunication system which is compliant with HIPAA requirements. Audio-only delivery is allowed only in situations where an audio/video system is not available or not feasible and when provided in a manner that is consistent with the applicable requirements of HIPAA.

### **Assessments and Re-evaluations**

Effective **May 12, 2023**, only LMHPs and psychiatrists may continue to conduct substance use disorder screenings and assessments via telemedicine/telehealth.

### **Group Therapy**

Effective **May 12, 2023**, OP-SUD treatment groups must be provided through an in-person service delivery method.

### **Documentation**

Progress Notes:

Providers should record all aspects of telephonic, telehealth and/or face-to-face encounters in the recipient's clinical record.

### **Staff Supervision**

Effective **May 12, 2023**, supervision must be provided using a secure HIPAA-compliant platform.

### **In-Person Encounters**

It is strongly recommended that all behavioral healthcare practitioners be vaccinated, unless there is a medical contra-indication.

For full details, please see [IB 20-7 revised 3/16/2023](#).

Questions regarding this message should be directed to AmeriHealth Caritas Louisiana Provider Services at 1-888-922-0007. The Provider Services Department can be reached between 7:00 am – 7:00 pm daily.

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