

Memorandum / Note de service

To: All Island Physicians

From: Dr. Andre Celliers
Executive Director Medical Affairs

Date : March 16, 2020

Tel: (902) 368-6261 Fax: (902) 620-3072

Subject : **CORRECTION:** Temporary Billing
Instructions for Care During COVID-19 Pandemic

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During the extraordinary circumstances associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, Medical Affairs will be instituting the following billing instructions to protect the health and safety of Islanders and to encourage social distancing in our primary care settings and in physician offices.

These measures are designed to alleviate emergency department visits, reduce the pressure on existing resources to provide care, and provide some capacity for staff training in preparation for a surge in cases. It will also reduce PPE usage and may help to reduce the volume of calls to 811.

Effective March 16, 2020, physicians will be eligible to bill for following fee codes for services delivered via telephone during the COVID-19 pandemic:

- Limited Office Visit – fee code xx13
- Health Promotion Counseling – fee code 2505
- Psychotherapy – fee code 2501
- Diagnostic and Therapeutic Interview – fee code 2588 or 2586

Billing Instructions:

- Service must be direct patient care by a physician to a patient, in lieu of a face-to-face visit.
- Service can be initiated by either the physician or the patient.
- These services are only billable for medically necessary services that can be safely and competently delivered via telephone.
- Physical examination not required when completed by telephone for fee code xx13.
- For time based codes (2501, 2505, 2586, and 2588) please make sure the time of day in on the claim. Also these codes are a minimum of 15 minutes.
- Patient chart must document that it was a telephone call in lieu of physical visit for COVID-19.
- Physicians must continue to document in patient chart as per Tariff of Fees Preamble requirements.
- For patients in self-isolation, the billing claim must include "COVID-19 self-isolation"
- For all other patient care delivered via telephone, the billing claim must include a comment "COVID-19 telemedicine"

This is a temporary measure, and will be reviewed in 30 days. Updates will be communicated on an ongoing basis.

For those physicians who are participating in COVID-19 planning meetings, you are eligible to bill fee code 0050 Administrative Meetings for time spent in these meetings. In the billing claim, please include in the comment "COVID-19 meeting".

CC: Mark Kickham, Manager Medicare
Dr. David Hambly, Medical Consultant