



April 11, 2022

SFY 2022 – DBH Guidance Document #7

Guidance Document for Telehealth Services Using Modifier FQ

Background

On March 1, 2022, the Division of Behavioral Health (DBH) issued a DBH eMemo notifying providers of changes to the reporting of telehealth services that will become effective April 1, 2022.

The eMemo introduced a new place of service code 10 that can be used when the client receiving services via telehealth is in their home (which is a location other than a hospital or other facility where the client receives care in a private residence).

Additionally, the eMemo introduced modifier FQ for used when telehealth is delivered via audio only communication technology.

Purpose

The following information is intended to provide guidance about the appropriate use of modifier FQ and the duration of the availability of this modifier.

Applicability

This guidance is applicable only to behavioral health claims submitted to Optum for services delivered by the provider types listed below:

- 1115 Waiver Substance Use Disorder
- 1115 Waiver Behavioral Health
- Autism
- Community Behavioral Health Services
- Independent Psychologists
- Independent Licensed Clinical Social Worker
- Independent Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist
- Independent Licensed Professional Counselor
- Mental Health Physician Clinics

Guidance

Modifier FQ should be appended to a procedure code to report services provided using audio-only communication technology for services on or after April 1, 2022.

Audio-only service provision is a modality offered as a flexibility *only during the COVID Public Health Emergency (PHE)*. All telehealth services performed during the PHE must follow the Hierarchy for Provision of Services as defined in the Division of Behavioral Health (DBH) Telehealth Emergency Response Policy Guidance first published March 23, 2020.

The most recent version of the DBH Telehealth Emergency Response Policy Guidance (version 1.3 published September 23, 2020) is included with this DBH Guidance Document. Guidance for the Hierarchy for Provision of Services pertinent to telehealth did not change on all versions of the DBH Telehealth Emergency Response Policy Guidance.

The Hierarchy for Provision of Services is as follows:

- Level 1 – In person
- Level 2 – Telehealth – Video
- Level 3 – Telephone
- Level 4 – Email
- Level 5 – Text Messaging

As of the writing of DBH SFY 2022 Guidance Document #7, the declaration of the PHE is scheduled to end April 15, 2022. This means use of modifier FQ to report telehealth services performed via audio only communication is only available for services performed April 1 through April 15, 2022.

If the declaration of the PHE is extended beyond April 15, 2022, DBH will issue guidance to adjust availability of modifier FQ to align with any PHE extension.

Place of service code 10 will remain available for use after the end of the PHE.

Modifier 95 or GT should be reported for all other telehealth services.

Questions regarding this guidance may be directed to mpassunit@alaska.gov. In the Subject Line please note: Telehealth Services Using Modifier FQ