Coding a telehealth visit

Teledermatology services can be performed in one of two-ways:

**Store and forward (asynchronous)** - Patient submits an image or pre-recorded video for the physician to review and provide advice, e.g., a patient sends a digital image of a lesion to the physician.

**Live interactive (synchronous)** - Real-time two-way interaction between the physician and patient e.g., patient initiates a video chat with the physician to discuss a rash.

**Non-face-to-face (virtual)** services are those services that would typically be rendered in-person directly to a patient (or via guardian), but instead are provided using on-line communication, real-time two-way audio/video platforms, email, EHR portals etc.

Dermatologists can also provide telehealth consultation services when advice is requested by another physician and delivered virtually without seeing the patient in question face-to-face. Consultation services provided between physicians are reported with inter-professional consultation codes 99446 - 99449 with place of service (POS) code 11 (office setting).

Medicare pays separately for brief communications or virtual check-in (short patient-initiated communications with a dermatologist or non physician clinician) reported with one of the following "G" codes:

- **G2010 (asynchronous)** - An established Medicare patient sends a digital image to his/her physician for evaluation.
- **G2012 (synchronous)** - A brief virtual check-in used for triage of a concern from an established patient. *A virtual check-in is a 5-10 minute live-video real-time two-way interaction between the patient and the dermatologist to determine if an in-person visit is necessary.*

The use of telehealth codes comes with new terminology and coding concepts. Certain telehealth services are reported with place of service (POS) code 02 to indicate the encounter was performed via telehealth. These include CPT codes 99201 - 99215; 99421 - 99423; 99441 - 99443; G2010 - G2012. Interprofessional teledermatology consultation codes are reported using POS 11 (office setting).
A teledermatology synchronous service rendered via a real-time two-way interactive audio and video telecommunications system that lasts more than a virtual check-in (5-10 minutes) can be reported using the E/M service codes 99201 – 99215.

Claims reported with E/M codes 99201 - 99215 and submitted to Medicare must be appended with modifier GQ whereas private payer codes are appended with modifier 95 for synchronous encounters.

**Modifier 95 (Private Payer):** Synchronous Telemedicine Service Rendered Via a Real-Time Interactive Audio and Video Telecommunications System

**Modifier GQ (Medicare):** Services delivered via asynchronous telecommunications system.