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# The impact of telehealth on injured person care

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# Presenters



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# Agenda

- The need for telehealth, remote technologies and virtual care
- Telehealth from an employer's perspective
- Policy actions surrounding telehealth and other technologies
- What's next: The future of telemedicine
- Impact of telehealth on injured person care

# The need for telehealth, remote technologies and virtual care

## Benefits

- Better care access/convenience
- Potential for better health outcomes
- Potential cost savings
- Patient compliance w/visits
- Right level of treatment for the injury



# Challenges

- Telehealth misconceptions
- Regulatory roadblocks  
(e.g., Physician licensing across state lines)
- Fees/reimbursements



# Telehealth, telemedicine and remote patient monitoring

## **Synchronous =**

Real-time communication

- Audio-video communication connect physicians and patients in different locations
- Audio and telephone communications (telemedicine)

## **Asynchronous =**

Saved communication to be transmitted and interpreted later

- Store-and-forward technologies collect images and data to be transmitted and interpreted later
- Remote patient-monitoring tools (e.g., blood pressure monitors) to communicate biometric data for review (may use mobile health apps)
- Online digital visits and/or audio-only services using patient portal, smartphone or landline

A detailed definition of telehealth and remote patient monitoring are in the [AMA's telehealth resource center](#)



## Technology learning curve

- Providers playing catch-up with telehealth technology
- From triage to end-to-end care
- Employers/injured workers had to solve for bandwidth, equipment
- Not all telehealth solutions were created equal-needed to know what to look for



# Telehealth in Workers' Comp



## Growing utilization

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- Telemedicine regulations more frequent in public policy
- Technology is beginning to improve efficiencies and outcomes
- Common services include:
  - Virtual face-to-face interactions
  - Text alerts/reminders and other messaging of health information








## Advantages

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- Provide 24/7 tele-triage
- Use in remote locations
- Access to specialist
- Monitor high-risk patients
- Provide second opinions
- Minimize delay in treatment
- Eliminate time and expense associated with patient travel

# Telehealth from a claims professional perspective

# Education

	<p><b>Planning</b></p>	<p>Create a plan that drives engagement</p>
	<p><b>Awareness</b></p>	<p>Explain the company’s vision</p>
	<p><b>Call to Action</b></p>	<p>Use key points that resonate</p>
	<p><b>Support</b></p>	<p>Provide clear instructions</p>
	<p><b>Measurement</b></p>	<p>Measure, adjust, and measure again</p>

# Utilization

- Strategic rollout process
- Nurse triage and employee-direct telehealth options

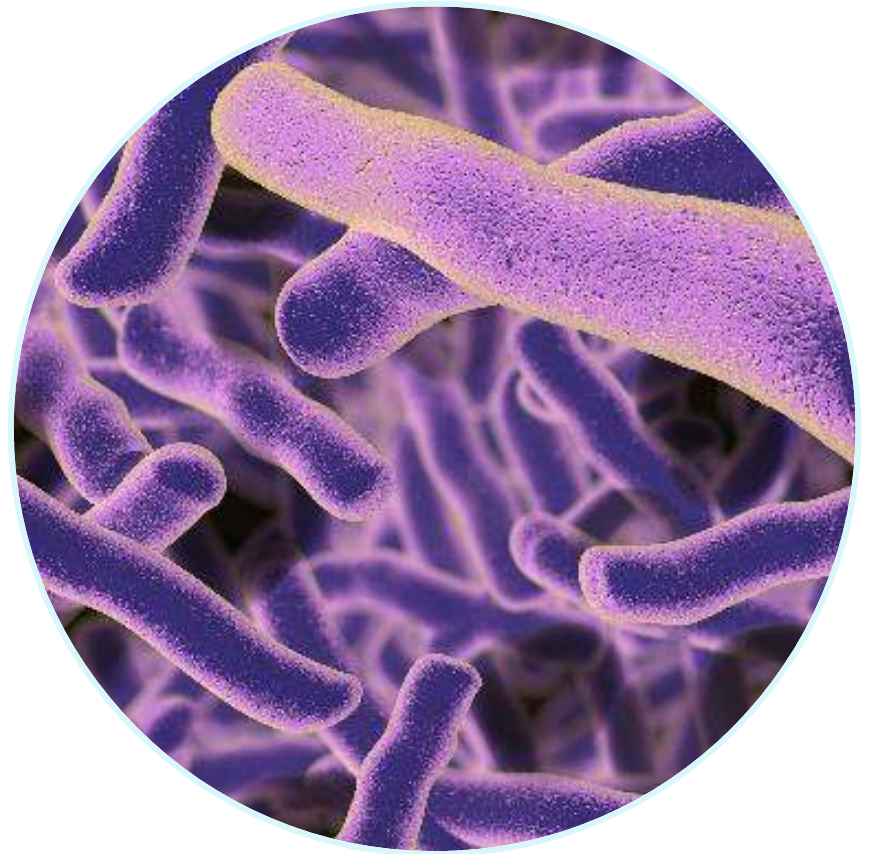


# Acceptance

- Building awareness among associates
- Gradual adoption by associates
- Understood value of telehealth

## Broader telehealth use cases

Blood borne pathogen exposures



# Policy actions

surrounding telehealth and  
other technologies



## State COVID emergency rules

- Presumptions for healthcare workers and first responders who experienced COVID-19 in course of employment
- “Stay At Home” temporary rules put in place during COVID for other workers
- Other immediate concerns were for the elderly and high-risk individuals
- Telehealth emerges as a way to allow continuity of care for injured workers

# State Telehealth Emergency Rules



**California** retroactive adoption of telemedicine codes in work comp physician/practitioner fee schedule



**Rhode Island and Kentucky** adopted/clarified work comp reimbursement rates



**Mississippi** suspended prior work comp fee schedule limits on telemedicine and expanded provider types

States replacing temporary rules with permanent rules for continuation of telehealth services throughout the COVID pandemic

## A boom for telehealth

Over **30 states** have implemented policies regarding telehealth in workers' comp.

- Payable billing codes and modifiers
- Inclusion of injured worker's home as "origination site"
- Waiving of pre-existing prior authorization requirements
- Payment parity between telemedicine and in-person visits
- Expansion to cover physical and occupational therapy

## Telehealth Federal Activity

- OWCP bulletins: Outline eligible treatments, coding and reimbursement rates
- Activity at HHS and CMS to expand telehealth usage including treatment modalities and reimbursement structures
- Federal efforts of expansion for Medicare may lead to other systems such as Medicaid, workers' comp and general health
- Future efforts will most likely follow Medicare but will it sustain post COVID?

## Changes in 2022

- Protecting and expanding access to telehealth has strong bipartisan support in Congress and among patients and healthcare providers
- Washington Dept. of Labor & Industries published permanent telehealth policies, effective March 4, 2022
- Mississippi work comp fee schedule modifications to address use of telemedicine and reimbursement requirements

# What's next

## The future of telemedicine

## Mobile labs



Lab tests ordered  
via telehealth

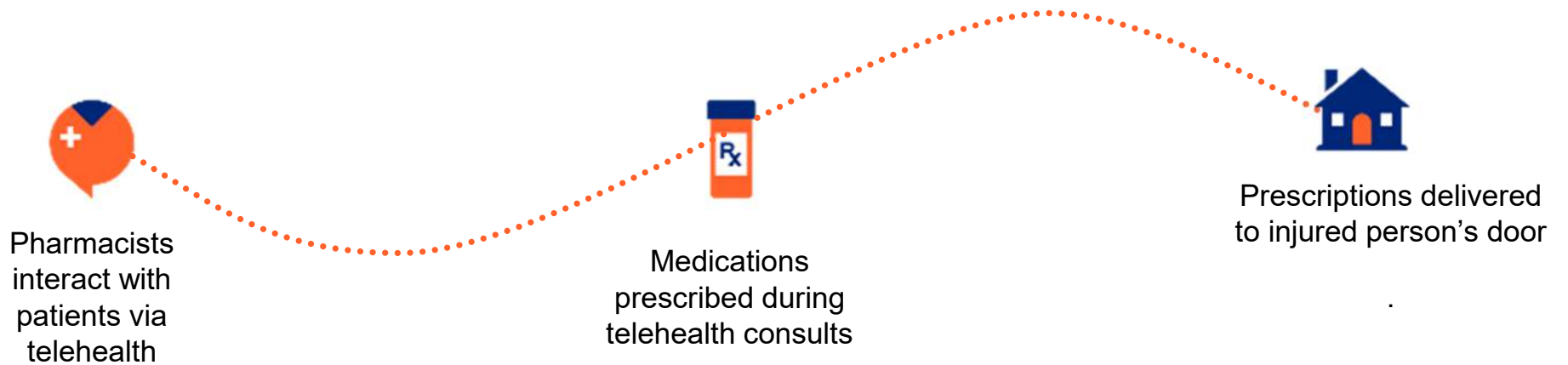


In-home  
blood draws



Online  
lab results

# Home delivery pharmacy from the first fill





# Impact of telehealth on injured person care

# Impact of telehealth on...



Prescriptions



Ancillary Services/  
Equipment



Specialty  
treatments



Behavioral  
Health



Treatment  
Guidelines



Panels



State Fee  
Schedules

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21-Jun	Catastrophic Claims Series Part 2: Caring for a catastrophic injury
26-Jul	Catastrophic Claims Series Part 3: Settlement for catastrophic claims
23-Aug	Catastrophic Claims Series Part 4: Long-term pharmacy
20-Sep	Minor injury management
25-Oct	MSP Compliance topic
15-Nov	A day in the life of a pharmacist
6-Dec	New products and medications in the workers' comp and auto no-fault marketplace

<https://workcompauto.optum.com/content/owca/owca/en/resources/continuing-education.html>

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