



August 9, 2019

Dear Tribal Health Leaders

On behalf of the Department of Health and Social Services (the department) and in keeping with the responsibility to conduct tribal consultation, I am writing to inform you of a proposed Medicaid state plan amendment (SPA). *The state offers this opportunity for consultation on the state plan concurrently with the opportunity for public comment on related proposed regulations.*

Purpose and content of the proposed amendment:

The department intends to submit an amendment streamlining language surrounding the reimbursement of services rendered using telemedicine applications. The proposed SPA will remove existing language listing specific services eligible for reimbursement when rendered via a telemedicine application (below).

Reimbursement is made for a telemedicine application if the services is:

- 1. An initial visit;*
- 2. A follow-up visit;*
- 3. A consultation made to confirm a diagnosis;*
- 4. A diagnosis, therapeutic referrals/orders, or interpretive service;*
- 5. A psychiatric or substance abuse assessment; or*
- 6. Psychotherapy or pharmacological management services on an individual recipient basis.*

The remaining language (below) clearly articulates the existing parameters of reimbursement for approved Medicaid services rendered using a telemedicine platform.

Payment for services delivered via telemedicine occurs [is made] according to the Medicaid payment methodology for the service and provider type.

Separate reimbursement is not available [made] for the use of technological equipment and systems associated with a telemedicine application to render the service.

Anticipated impact on Medicaid-eligible Alaska Native/American Indian beneficiaries:

The department does not believe the proposed revision will have a direct impact on tribal beneficiaries because reimbursement for services provided via a telemedicine platform continues.

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Anticipated impact on tribal health programs and the Indian Health Service (IHS):

The department does not believe that the removal of this language will have a direct impact on tribal health organizations or the IHS because reimbursement for services rendered via a telemedicine platform continues.

Mechanism and timeline for comment:

Written comments or questions regarding the proposed amendment are due September 27, 2019, by 5:00 PM. If you would like to arrange an in-person meeting regarding the proposed changes, please provide a written request within 15-days of the date of this letter. Please direct all written correspondence to Courtney O'Byrne King, Alaska Department of Health and Social Services, 4501 Business Park Boulevard, Building L. Anchorage, AK 99503, or courtney.king@alaska.gov.

*Comments received in response to this consultation letter are for consultation purposes only and not considered as comment on the proposed regulations. Comments on the proposed regulations are not considered comments regarding the proposed SPA. **If you wish to provide comment for consideration in both the SPA consultation process and the regulations process, you must do so separately.** To locate the regulations, please refer to the State of Alaska, Department of Health and Social Services web page, at the "Public Notices" link.*

Sincerely,

Courtney O'Byrne King, MS
Medicaid State Plan Coordinator

