Telehealth in a Pandemic: NC Medicaid Learnings

October 2020
Steep increases in telehealth and telephonic claims and an even steeper decrease in-person claims combined to produce dramatic increases in telehealth and telephonic claims ratios.

All modalities decrease with claims adjudication.
Ratio of telehealth and telephonic to in-person claims jump after NC Medicaid implements telehealth/telephonic policy changes
% Beneficiaries Served via Telemedicine by Week | 03/01/2020 – 09/12/2020

- Rate starts to decrease in late April coinciding with Phase 2 and rebound in in-person services
- Over the course of this time period, **309,966** beneficiaries have had at least one telemedicine encounter
Behavioral Health Telehealth, Telephonic Uptake | 01/30/20 – 08/24/20

- While in-person behavioral health (BH) claims (grey line, left chart) have decreased, telehealth claims (yellow line, left chart) have jumped. This relationship produces the spike in the ratio of telehealth to in-person services represented by the yellow line in the chart on the right.

Telehealth, Telephonic and In-person Claims Volume

Telehealth and Telephonic to In-Person Service Ratios

Data pulled from CCNC behavioral health dashboard
Combined Telehealth/Telephonic to In-Person Ratios by Ethnicity | 12/30/19 – 08/30/20

Data pulled from CCNC dashboard, containing mainly primary care and OB claims
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>12/30/19 – 08/30/20</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black Tele Claims Adjudication Period</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>White Tele Claims Adjudication Period</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Asian/Pacific Islander Tele Claims Adjudication Period</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Native America/Alaska Native Tele Claims Adjudication Period</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Combined Telehealth/Telephonic to In-Person Ratios by Race | 12/30/19 – 08/30/20
Combined Telehealth/Telephonic to In-Person Ratios by Age Group1 | 12/30/19 – 08/30/20

1. The ratio for the 65+ age group for the week of 8/24/20 has been suppressed due to a small number of claims.

Data pulled from CCNC dashboard, containing mainly primary care and OB claims.
Data pulled from CCNC dashboard, containing mainly primary care and OB claims
### Telehealth Claims by Service Category Trend

![Graph showing the trend of Telehealth Claims by Service Category from March 22 to September 6.](image)

### Telehealth Claims by Service Category Counts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Speech Evaluation and Therapy</td>
<td>4,996</td>
<td>57,398</td>
<td>69,142</td>
<td>46,176</td>
<td>42,446</td>
<td>22,886</td>
<td>2,233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PT &amp; OT Evaluation and Therapy</td>
<td>2,552</td>
<td>31,042</td>
<td>19,101</td>
<td>15,798</td>
<td>12,012</td>
<td>5,172</td>
<td>756</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nutrition/Dietary Eval and Counseling</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>492</td>
<td>492</td>
<td>490</td>
<td>411</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audiology</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outpatient Respiratory Therapy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data refreshed as of 9/24/2020, and claims data reflective of 8/9/2020 service begin date.
Telehealth Utilization – Behavioral Health Services

Telehealth Claims by Service Category Trend

Telehealth Claims by Service Category Counts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Psychiatric Diagnostic Evaluation and Psychotherapy</td>
<td>13,820</td>
<td>64,589</td>
<td>67,208</td>
<td>68,000</td>
<td>62,504</td>
<td>54,312</td>
<td>122,030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhanced Behavioral Health Services</td>
<td>1,248</td>
<td>14,096</td>
<td>23,881</td>
<td>27,440</td>
<td>25,282</td>
<td>18,645</td>
<td>28,532</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autism Spectrum Disorder</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>2,506</td>
<td>4,022</td>
<td>3,424</td>
<td>3,023</td>
<td>1,283</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developmental/Behavioral Screening and Testing</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>1,440</td>
<td>1,888</td>
<td>1,782</td>
<td>1,517</td>
<td>638</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data refreshed as of 9/24/2020, and claims data effective of 9/4/2020 service begins.
Virtual/Telephonic Utilization – Behavioral Health Services

Virtual Telephonic Claims by Service Category Trend

Virtual Telephonic Claims by Service Category Counts

- Enhanced Behavioral Health Services
  - March 2020: 1,997
  - April 2020: 20,105
  - May 2020: 24,851
  - June 2020: 20,463
  - July 2020: 29,044
  - August 2020: 15,440
  - September 2020: 0

- Psychiatric Diagnostic Evaluation and Psychotherapy
  - March 2020: 2,349
  - April 2020: 6,329
  - May 2020: 9,212
  - June 2020: 10,954
  - July 2020: 10,079
  - August 2020: 6,673
  - September 2020: 9

- Developmental/Behavioral Screening and Testing
  - March 2020: 10
  - April 2020: 99
  - May 2020: 58
  - June 2020: 55
  - July 2020: 49
  - August 2020: 31
  - September 2020: 3

- Autism Spectrum Disorder
  - March 2020: 1
  - April 2020: 48
  - May 2020: 52
  - June 2020: 54
  - July 2020: 60
  - August 2020: 27
  - September 2020: 0

Data refreshed as of 9/14/2020, and claims data reflective of 9/6/2020 service begin date.
All Claims – COVID Flexibilities Utilization

NC Medicaid COVID-19 Monitoring
Telecode Utilization by Modality - Provider County

Data refreshed as of 9/24/2020, and claims data reflective of 9/4/2020 service begin date.
All Claims – COVID Flexibilities Audiology

NC Medicaid COVID-19 Monitoring
Telecode Utilization by Modality - Provider County

Total Claims per Service Provider County

- Total Claims
- Telehealth Claims
- Virtual Telephonic Claims
- In Person Claims

% Telecode Utilization

All values

NC Medicaid Telecode Utilization

- 820 Telehealth Claims
- 0 Virtual Telephonic Claims

Data refreshed as of 9/14/2020, and claims data reflective of 9/4/2020 service begin date.
All Claims – COVID Flexibilities Self Measured Blood Pressure

NC Medicaid COVID-19 Monitoring
Telecode Utilization by Modality - Provider County

Total Claims per Service Provider County

NC Medicaid Telecode Utilization

0 Telehealth Claims
73 Virtual Telephonic Claims

Data refreshed as of 9/24/2020, and claims data reflects 9/6/2020 service begin date.
All Claims – COVID Flexibilities Smoking and Tobacco Cessation

NC Medicaid COVID-19 Monitoring
Telecode Utilization by Modality - Provider County

Data refreshed as of 9/14/2020, and claims data reflective of 9/14/2020 service begin date.
Teleservice Utilization Odds by Geography, Race and Disease Type

Odds of Teleservice Utilization Among Groups

- Urban vs. Rural: 1.2
- White vs. Black: 1.2
- Non-Hispanic vs. Hispanic: 1.4
- Chronic vs. Non-Chronic: 2.9

For Chronic vs. Non-Chronic, Teleservice Utilization is more likely.

Teleservice Utilization More Likely | Teleservice Utilization Less Likely
Teleservice Utilization Odds by COVID-19 Diagnosed Groups

Odds of Teleservice Utilization Among COVID-19 Diagnosed Groups

- Urban vs. Rural: 1.6
- White vs. Black: 1.0
- Non-Hispanic vs. Hispanic: 5.7
- Chronic vs. Non-Chronic: 1.1

Legends:
- Blue: Teleservice Utilization More Likely
- Orange: Teleservice Utilization Less Likely
# Rates of Telehealth Among ABD Beneficiaries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Patients</th>
<th>Total Telehealth</th>
<th>Client ABD Status</th>
<th>Percent Telehealth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21,124</td>
<td>2,797</td>
<td>NULL</td>
<td>13.24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>410,777</td>
<td>86,848</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>21.14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>114,680</td>
<td>31,745</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>27.68%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Using Teleservices to Close Care Gap

Primary care practices that adopted teleservices at higher rates saw a much larger proportion of their patients during the first three months of the COVID-19 period.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary care practices' level of teleservice claims through May 2020</th>
<th># of Practices</th>
<th># of Patients Receiving Primary Care</th>
<th>Est. % of Panel Accessing Practice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HIGH (100+)</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>111493</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MED (20-99)</td>
<td>357</td>
<td>87059</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOW (1-19)</td>
<td>586</td>
<td>60922</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NONE</td>
<td>586</td>
<td>64829</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>1620</td>
<td>324303</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Providers engaged in teleservices were slower to bill

Lookback Period (Sept.-Dec. 2019)
- Slow
- Medium
- Fast

COVID-19 Period (March-May 2020)
A Second Visit Was Less Likely After Teleservices
Hospitalization Following Primary Care Visit

*Chi-square table calculations indicated the relationship between teleservice utilization and a decrease/increase in ED/INPT visits among frequent flier populations was not statistically significant.
Impact on Total Cost of Care
 Counties’ rates of primary care and OB services that were telehealth:
  • decrease as the percent of counties’ populations living in rural areas increases
  • increase as the percent of counties’ populations with broadband access increases

These relationships do not hold for behavioral health telehealth services

Rurality and Broadband data pulled from the Federal Communication Commission’s Mapping Broadband Health in America project - https://www.fcc.gov/health/maps/developers
County's rates of primary care and OB services that were telehealth (top right):

• decrease as the percent of counties’ populations living in rural areas (bottom left) increases
• increase as the percent of counties’ populations with broadband access (bottom right) increases

These relationships do not hold for behavioral health telehealth services.

Claims data pulled from CCNC dashboard
Rurality and Broadband data pulled from the Federal Communication Commission’s Mapping Broadband Health in America project - [https://www.fcc.gov/health/maps/developers](https://www.fcc.gov/health/maps/developers)
Overcoming Barriers

State

- Office Rural Health broadband and other initiatives
- DHHS Telehealth Workstream
- Medicaid Telehealth Expansion
- Collaboration with DMH on Telehealth Expansion
- Convened the Payers Council to align coverage transparently across plans
- Crowd sourced video to encourage patients to engage in telehealth
  - https://youtu.be/_0c4kLeBXgY
- Practice Supports deployed to Low Telehealth Utilizers in high risk areas
Overcoming Barriers

• Providers and Patients
  • Family or friends would loan use of devices or networks
  • Practices would open their network access and extended it
  • Public places like libraries and schools had open access wifi
  • Ipad Model of visit
  • NCMS offered free telehealth platform for practices to use

A Story of Two Counties: August 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Buncombe</th>
<th>Madison</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Many Options</td>
<td>One Provider</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Speed</td>
<td>Low Speed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dedicated</td>
<td>Shared</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reliable Connection</td>
<td>Intermittent Connection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Down: 200 mB</td>
<td>Down: 20 mB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Up: 20 mB</td>
<td>Up: 5 mB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$70 per month</td>
<td>$140 per month</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PLUS:
Tree Removal
Tower Upgrade $1,600
The Digital Divide