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Training with Highmark

The program will begin at noon.

You will hear silence until we begin.

Please take this opportunity to check your connections.

The Q&A box is available to type any questions or issues.

Lunch and Learn with Highmark Professional Education
CME/CEU Webinar Series

Navigating Telehealth: Best Practices for Virtual Care

November 11, 2025

Learning Objectives

- Identify what constitutes Telehealth
- Illustrate Telehealth functionality and modality
- Outline various types of Telehealth equipment
- Identify common areas of Fraud, Waste and Abuse (FWA) within Telehealth

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Today's Speakers

Financial Investigations Provider Review ("FIPR")

Anne Lacienski, CPMA, *Manager*

Jayme Patterson, CPC, *Senior Investigator*

Cynthia Scott, CPC, *Senior Investigator*

Sherry Roedersheimer, COC, CPC,CPMA, *Lead Investigator*

Agenda

❖ Defining Telehealth

❖ Telehealth Functionality and Overview of Modalities

❖ Telehealth Equipment

❖ Common areas of Potential Fraud, Waste and Abuse (FWA)

❖ Reporting Potential FWA

Note: Providers must know the limitations of a member's plan to make sure services provided are covered by the member's plan

Defining Telehealth

Defining Telehealth

- Telehealth encompasses a broad range of health-related services delivered via electronic and telecommunications technologies

Key Telehealth Components

- **Remote Patient Monitoring -** Using devices to remotely collect and transmit patient data (e.g., vital signs) to healthcare providers

- **Live Video Conferencing -** Real-time interaction between a patient and a provider using video technology. This allows for consultations, diagnoses and treatment planning

- **Store-and-Forward -** Sharing medical information (e.g., images, lab results) electronically with a provider who reviews it at a later time

- **Mobile Health (mHealth) -** Using mobile devices and apps to deliver healthcare services, such as medication reminders, health tracking and educational resources

- **Remote Consultation -** Allows a primary care provider or specialist at one location to consult with another provider at a distant location, often to review patient cases or provide guidance

Telehealth Functionality and Overview of Modalities

Functionalities and Modalities

- Telehealth uses various modalities to provide remote healthcare services, with the four main being:
  - Live video
  - Store-and-forward
  - Remote patient monitoring (RPM)
  - mHealth

Functionalities

- Real-time consultations via video or phone
- Secure transmission of images and records for later review
- Continuous patient monitoring through connected devices
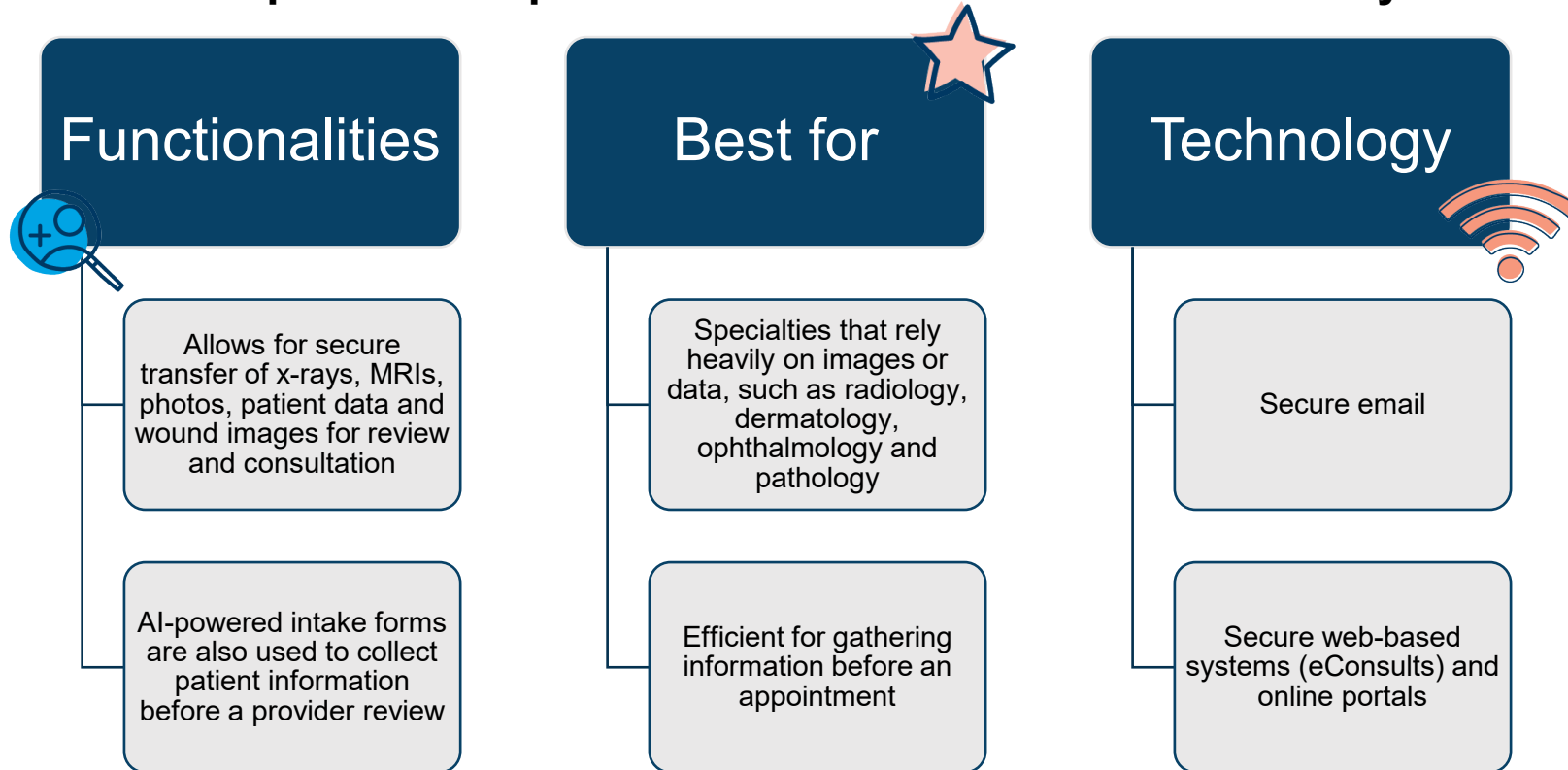- Use of mobile apps for various health services and data collection

Live Video (Synchronous)

- Real-time, two-way interaction between a patient and healthcare provider using audio and video technology

  - **Functionalities:** Allows for live virtual visits, consultations, diagnosis, treatment and psychotherapy

  - **Best for:** General check-ups, follow-up visits, mental and behavioral health services and specialty consultations where the provider needs to observe the patient

  - **Technology:** Video conferencing units, webcams, secure messaging, computers, smartphones and tablets

Store-and-forward (Asynchronous)

Involves transmitting medical data – such as images, videos and patient records – to a provider to be reviewed at a later time. **The patient and provider do not interact simultaneously.**

Functionalities

- Allows for secure transfer of x-rays, MRIs, photos, patient data and wound images for review and consultation

- AI-powered intake forms are also used to collect patient information before a provider review

Best for

- Specialties that rely heavily on images or data, such as radiology, dermatology, ophthalmology and pathology

- Efficient for gathering information before an appointment

Technology

- Secure email

- Secure web-based systems (eConsults) and online portals

Remote Patient Monitoring (RPM)

RPM uses digital devices to collect and transmit medical and health data from patients to healthcare providers. This allows for continuous tracking and management of a patient's health.

Health Monitoring Platforms

integrio.net

Functionalities:

- Continuously collects data on vital signs, blood pressure, glucose levels, heart rate, weight and blood oxygen levels

- Data analysis and alert systems help providers identify health risks before they escalate

Best for:

- Managing chronic diseases like hypertension, congestive heart failure and diabetes

- Monitoring patients post-discharge to reduce hospital readmissions

Technology:

- Bluetooth-enabled medical devices

- Wireless scales

- Pulse oximeters

- Blood pressure cuffs

- Continuous glucose monitors

- Wearable trackers

Mobile health (mHealth)

Uses mobile devices like smartphones and tablets to support medical and public health practices. It can involve other modalities, like RPM, but centers on apps for health education, tracking and management.

Functionalities

- Medication reminders
- Symptom tracking
- Fitness monitoring
- Personalized health information
- Direct communication with providers

Best for

- Improving patient engagement
- Promoting medication adherence
- Tracking lifestyle habits
- Accessing health education materials

Technology

- Smartphone apps
- Wearable devices

Telehealth Equipment

Optimizing Telehealth: Essential Equipment Foundation

Core Connectivity: The Internet

High-Speed Broadband-Essential for a clear and uninterrupted experience	• Wired Ethernet connections
Sufficient Bandwidth	• The goal is no buffering or dropped calls
Backup Solutions	• Consider secondary internet providers if applicable to maintain continuity of care during network outages
Audio and Visual Clarity: Seeing and Hearing	• Effective communication is key
External Webcam (HD/Full HD)	• External 1080p (Full HD) webcams provide sharper images allowing for better observation of patients
Quality Microphone	• Dedicated USB microphone or a headset with noise-canceling microphone
Professional Headset	• Comfortable headset with an integrated microphone

Optimizing Telehealth: Essential Equipment Foundation-Cont.

Adequate Lighting	• Ensure you are clearly visible to the patients
Dedicated Workstations	• Use a computer or tablet specifically for telehealth
Updated Operating Systems	• Ensure the device runs a current, supported operating system with security patches applied
Antivirus/Antimalware	• This is a MUST! Comprehensive and up-to-date security software
Strong Passwords and Encryption	• All devices MUST be protected with complex passwords and encrypted data storage

Advanced Telehealth Equipment
Specialized Diagnostic and Remote Patient Monitoring

Remote Patient Monitoring (RPM) Devices

Crucial for proactive management of chronic conditions and post-acute care

Bluetooth-enabled Blood Pressure Cuffs

Automatically measure and transmit data to the provider

Wireless Glucose Meters

Diabetic management devices that send blood glucose levels to the provider

Pulse Oximeters

Critical for critical conditions

Smart Scales

Weight management for certain conditions indicating fluid retention

Wearable Sensors (E.g., for continuous cardiac monitoring)

Trackers for activity, sleep, heart rate and possibly EKG data

Remote Physical Exam Tools

Digital Stethoscopes:

- Transmit heart, lung and bowel sounds in real-time

Digital Otoscopes/Opthalmoscopes:

- Providers may view high resolution images or vides of ear canals, tympanic membranes or retinas

Dermatoscopes:

- Provide magnified assessment of images of skin lesions in remote dermatology visits

Preventing FWA with Proper Equipment

Legitimate Use – Avoid providing equipment without clear justification

Proper Acquisition – Acquire all equipment through established and appropriate channels

Documentation and Security – Maintain meticulous records for any equipment used

All Devices handling PHI must be fully secured, encrypted and regularly updated to prevent data breaches

Common Areas of Potential Fraud, Waste and Abuse (FWA)

Definitions

Waste
is defined as the overutilization of professional medical services or the misuse of resources by a healthcare provider.

Fraud
is defined by state and federal laws and typically occurs when a provider or consumer intentionally submits, or causes someone else to submit, false or misleading information to a health insurance company for the purpose of receiving payments that an individual or entity is not eligible to receive.

Abuse
is defined as incidents or practices of providers, physicians or suppliers of services and equipment that are inconsistent with accepted sound medical, business or fiscal practices.

Financial Investigations and Provider Review (FIPR)

Highmark's Financial Investigations and Provider Review (FIPR) department's mission is to support Highmark's vision of providing affordable, quality healthcare by ensuring that provider reimbursements are appropriate and to protect Highmark's assets by investigating and resolving suspected incidents of healthcare insurance fraud, waste or abuse (FWA).

In addition to conducting post-payment practice pattern reviews, FIPR also investigates potential member and provider FWA. Highmark's FIPR unit takes a proactive approach to detecting and investigating potential healthcare FWA. When necessary, FIPR takes internal and/or external corrective action regarding fraudulent activity that impacts Highmark, its customers or members.

Common Areas of Potential Telehealth FWA

Fraud

- Billing for services not rendered
- Upcoding or overbilling
- Identity theft
- Prescription fraud
- Kickbacks and bribes

Waste

- Unnecessary services
- Inefficient processes
- Overutilization

Abuse

- Improper billing practices
- Lack of appropriate supervision
- Violations of privacy and security

Billing Patterns

High Volume Billing

Providers billing for an unusually high number of telehealth visits, especially if significantly higher than their peers.

Billing Errors

Using in-person billing codes for telehealth services or failing to use the correct CPT and HCPCS codes, including appropriate modifiers, is a frequent mistake.

Consistent high-level coding

Providers consistently billing for the highest level of service codes, regardless of patient complexity.

Duplicate Billing

Billing multiple times for the same service.

"Phantom Billing"

Billing for services or equipment that patients deny receiving.

Lack of Documentation

Insufficient or missing documentation to support billed services.

Prescribing Practices

- **Inappropriate prescribing:** Prescriptions of controlled substances without proper examination or medical necessity. Authorized providers are able to prescribe controlled substances via telehealth if they meet certain criteria

- **"Doctor shopping"** Patients obtaining multiple prescriptions from different telehealth providers

- **Unusual prescribing patterns:** Significant deviations from typical prescribing practices for specific conditions

Areas of Potential Telehealth FWA

Other areas to look out for include:

Provider Qualifications and Credentialing

Lack of Proper Licensure – ensuring telehealth providers are appropriately licensed and credentialed in the state where the patient is located.

Questionable Credentials – investigating providers with suspicious or unverifiable credentials.

Patient Eligibility and Enrollment

Falsified Information – patients providing false information to gain access to telehealth services.

Identity Theft – using someone else's identity to obtain services.

Marketing and Enrollment Practices

Aggressive or Misleading Marketing – marketing materials that make unrealistic promises or pressure patients to enroll.

Improper Incentives – offering improper incentives to patients for enrolling in telehealth programs.

Technical Security and Privacy

Lack of HIPAA Compliance – ensuring telehealth platforms and providers are compliant with HIPAA regulations and regarding patient privacy and data security.

Data Breaches – investigating any reports of data breaches or security incidents.

Red Flags

Watch out for red flags that could indicate potential fraud. If you suspect potential healthcare fraud, please let us know.

Some of the factors that could indicate potential fraud include:

- **Sudden increases in telehealth claims.** (e.g., A family practice that suddenly starts billing for a high volume of complex psychiatric evaluations via telehealth when they previously did none)

- **Clusters of patients receiving similar telehealth services from the same provider.** (e.g., A therapist using the same standardized script for all telehealth counseling sessions, regardless of the patient's specific issues)

- **Patient complaints about billing errors or inappropriate services.** (e.g., Patients complaining about being billed for telehealth services they never received)

- **Reports of data breaches or security incidents. (**e.g., A provider failing to encrypt telehealth sessions, leaving patient data vulnerable to interception)

- **Providers who are new to telehealth or have a history of fraud, waste or abuse. (e.g.,** A new telehealth provider who is unaware of specific state regulations regarding telehealth services)

Reporting FWA

Reporting Fraud, Waste and Abuse Government Segment

You have the option to remain anonymous at all times. We have a team of people who look into all calls or mail regarding possible FWA of healthcare services.

PA
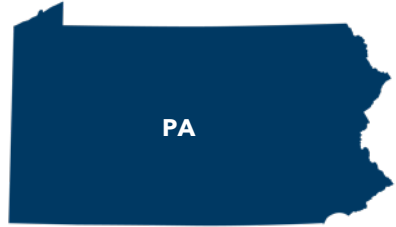
Highmark Wholecare
Delivery Code: FIPR
Attn: FWA/SIU Unit
120 Fifth Ave.
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

844-718-6400   SIU@highmark.com   Online Form

DE

Highmark Health Options   844-325-6256   SIU_HHO@highmark.com   Online Form
Or Highmark Health Options Duals
Delivery Code: HHOFRAUD
Attn: FWA/SIU Unit
120 Fifth Ave.
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

WV

Highmark Health Options   844-718-6400   SIU_HHO@highmark.com   Online Form
Delivery Code: FIPR
Attn: FWA/SIU Unit
120 Fifth Ave.
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

If you suspect Fraud, Waste or Abuse, please report it so we may look into your concerns.

Reporting Fraud, Waste and Abuse Highmark Enterprise

Highmark – PA and DE

P.O. Box 890138
Camp Hill, PA 17089-0138

1-800-438-2478

Online Form

Fax: 717-635-4590

Highmark WV

614 Market Street
P.O. Box 1948
Parkersburg, WV 26102

800-788-5661

Online Form

Fax: 717-635-4590

Highmark NY

1 Seneca Street, Ste 3400
Buffalo, NY 14203

800-333-8451 or 800-314-0025

Online Form

Fax: 717-635-4590

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Thank you

Resources

- [Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS)](#)
- [Office of the Inspector General (OIG)](#)
- [National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA)](#)
- [Novitas Solutions](#)
- 42 and 45 CFR