

Crisis Teledentistry Implementation Guide

In response to the COVID-19 crisis, the Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS) will temporarily reimburse for dental evaluations and case management appointments that occur virtually. This enables clinicians to care for their patients while adhering to social distancing guidelines; it is also intended to divert patients from the emergency department. Through teledentistry patient visits occur over video chat or by analyzing photos of a patient's concern with subsequent electronic messaging. Teledentistry is not a specific service, but rather a means to provide care and education during these uncertain times. These changes are retroactively effective for dates of service March 12, 2020 through July 31, 2020. DentaQuest and DMAS will modify this timeframe if necessary.

Virginia Medicaid Billing Updates

Smiles for Children is going to begin to reimburse clinics for teledentistry using the [ADA guidelines](#) from March 12, 2020 through July 31, 2020.

Teledentistry Coverage – the following codes may be used in accordance with the ADA and Smiles For Children program guidelines.

D9994	Case management – patient education to improve oral health literacy	Benefit limitation - 2 per 6 months per patient. Documentation of encounter shall be maintained in the patient chart. This code shall be reported in addition to other diagnostic procedures on the same date of service.	\$8.28
D9995	Teledentistry – synchronous; real-time encounter	Benefit limitation - 4 per 6 months per patient. Documentation of encounter mechanism shall be maintained in the patient chart. This code shall be reported in addition to other diagnostic procedures on the same date of service.	\$35.00
D9996	Teledentistry – asynchronous; information stored and forwarded to a dentist for subsequent review	Benefit limitation - 4 per 6 months per patient. Documentation shall be maintained in the patient chart. This code shall be reported in addition to other diagnostic procedures on the same date of service.	\$15.00
D0140	Limited oral evaluation – problem focused	Benefit limitation – relaxed. Documentation shall be maintained in the patient chart	\$24.83
D0170	Re-evaluation – limited, problem focused (established patient; not post-operative visit)	Benefit limitation – relaxed. Documentation shall be maintained in the patient chart	\$24.83

D1354 Silver Diamine Fluoride (SDF) – Benefit limitation updated to remove requirements for first and second application and definitive treatment. New benefit limitation: Two applications per lifetime per patient per tooth.

Pregnant Women Eligibility – Temporary extension of the pregnant women benefit beyond 60 days postpartum.

Teledentistry Overview

Teledentistry is a method of providing oral health consultation, care, and education over a virtual platform. It enables clinicians to communicate with patients to provide advice, consultation, and triage, and creates a complete record of images, forms, consent, payment, etc. It is not a specific service and it does not change a provider's scope of practice. A health professional is only allowed to perform procedures through teledentistry that they can perform in-person.

[Teledentistry White Paper](#) (Dentaquest)

Pros and Cons of Teledentistry

Teledentistry provides patients with secure, one-stop access to a provider without the need to leave home, which can ease multiple burdens on families while offering the provider flexibility and another touch-point for care. It has also been shown to improve patient outcomes, patient and provider satisfaction, and accessibility to a dentist. However, it also requires adequate broadband support, a modest level of technical literacy and can be especially difficult if translation or other accommodations are necessary. During the COVID-19 outbreak, teledentistry is an effective way to triage patients and conduct problem-focused evaluations to limit office visits to patients needing urgent or emergency care and to reduce time in the office overall.

Crisis Teledentistry in Virginia During COVID-19

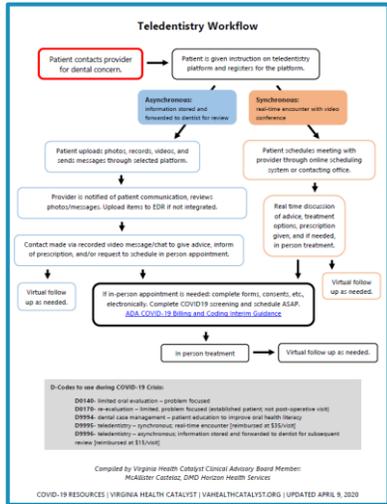
To practice Teledentistry in Virginia, the provider must hold an active Virginia dental license. Teledentistry does *not* change the scope of practice or supervision laws - it *enhances* how dental practices provide care. It also provides an opportunity to share additional resources patients may need, such as links to food supports or housing assistance (many safety-net clinics have resource lists available). Remember to remind the patient that oral health care will be ongoing.

Steps to Implement Crisis Teledentistry

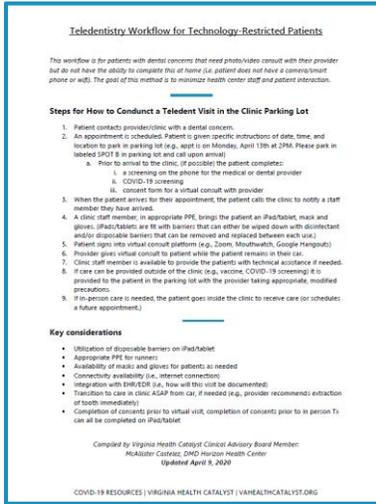
1. Identify a [communication platform](#) to use
2. Integrate this platform into your clinic's current [workflow](#)
3. Train your staff on platform and procedures
4. Have resources ready for patients: [Patient Guidance Form](#), [Patient Assessment for Teledentistry](#), instructions how to use specific technology, and/or language interpretation services
5. [Inform patients](#) about the availability of teledentistry (If you are able: update website/social media with teledentistry information, call patients, and/or send notification email to all patients)
6. Remind patients and staff that teledentistry is not definitive care, but an enhancement of person-to-person care
7. Evaluate how teledentistry is meeting patient's need, modify practice, evaluate again
8. Identify additional region-specific resources to share with patients for other health needs (i.e. food banks, housing resources, mental health resources, etc.)

Resources for Crisis Teledentistry Implementation

Teledentistry Workflow Chart



Teledentistry Workflow (for technology restricted patients)



Teledentistry Platform Options

System	HIPAA Compliant	Healthcare / Dental Oriented	Patient experience - easy/floor friendly?	Provider experience - easy/floor friendly?	Consent	Forms / Signatures
Abolition	Yes	Yes	Relatively easy but if patient is not comfortable with technology they may struggle	Yes, able to change quality of image. Good internet connection is key	Yes	HIPAA compliant but through patient portal and where documents for patient to sign and return
Teledentistry.com	Yes	Yes	Yes, can integrate with EHR	Web-based and Android or iOS app	Yes	Yes
Teledentistry.com	Yes	Yes	Yes, can integrate with EHR	Web-based and Android or iOS app	Yes	Yes
Zoom	Yes	Yes	Relatively easy but if patient is not comfortable with technology they may struggle	Requires download of specific app. Relatively easy, but if patient is not comfortable with technology they may struggle	Requires download of specific app. Relatively easy, but if patient is not comfortable with technology they may struggle	No, do not recommend
Doxy.me	Yes	Yes	Yes, unable to integrate with EHR	Requires download of specific app. Relatively easy, but if patient is not comfortable with technology they may struggle	Requires download of specific app. Relatively easy, but if patient is not comfortable with technology they may struggle	HIPAA compliant, messaging, but how to get signed and returned documents unclear
Doxy.me	Yes	Yes	Yes, unable to integrate with EHR	Requires download of specific app. Relatively easy, but if patient is not comfortable with technology they may struggle	Requires download of specific app. Relatively easy, but if patient is not comfortable with technology they may struggle	HIPAA compliant, messaging, but how to get signed and returned documents unclear

Template to Alert Patients of Teledent Option

Notify Patients about Teledentistry Option

Notify patients that virtual appointments are available and provide step by step instructions:

- Update website and social media channels
- Send text, email or letter to patients

Message Template

Hello [patient name],

In light of COVID-19, [Name of practice] now offers virtual consults, also known as teledentistry.

Virtual consults allow us to offer a real-time consult to you while you remain in the safety of your own home and adhere to social distancing guidelines.

If you are having a dental emergency, follow these steps:

- Contact your doctor if (please number) to learn about virtual consultations.
- The doctor will walk you through how to take video and/or photos of your health concerns.
- Send video/photos to your doctor.
- The doctor will review the photographs, videos, and/or text messages.
- The doctor will contact you with recommendations for treatment.

[These instructions should be specific to your clinic. This might include the web address to register for platform, registration integrated on clinic website if possible, email of office to contact and schedule a secure virtual meeting, or online scheduling platform address to schedule teledental consult.]

Please contact our office if you wish to discuss at home strategies to help maintain your oral health until you can return to our office. Our dental team is happy to help manage your oral health goals!

We look forward to continuing to provide care for you and your loved ones, and look forward to your return.

COVID-19 RESOURCES | VIRGINIA HEALTH CATALYST | VAHEALTHCATALYST.ORG | APRIL 7, 2020

Six Things to Consider Before Conducting a Teledent Consult

Six Things to Consider Before Conducting a Teledentistry Visit

Teledentistry visits are inherently different, especially during COVID-19. Use the tips below to put your patient at ease, and ensure a successful visit.

1. **Environment**
 - Avoid doors/windows in the background - these can distract the patient
 - Aim for bright, neutral wall
 - Declutter shelves
 - Consider using a curtain to create a neutral, professional background
2. **Lighting**
 - Make sure you are well lit
 - Use table lights if possible, avoid fluorescent overhead lights
 - Avoid light sources behind you so you are not in shadow
3. **Equipment Set-Up**
 - Place your tablet or monitor if needed so webcam is positioned at eye level
 - Center your face in the screen
 - Use a noise-canceling headset to avoid ambient noise
 - Use stands for phone/tablet rather than holding in your hand
 - Troubleshoot your set-up before the appointment
4. **Personal appearance**
 - Place necessary signage so you are not interrupted
 - Minimize background noise from family, pets, etc.
 - Dress professionally, avoid patterns and distracting jewelry
 - Check to see if there is glare off your eyeglasses
 - Do not drink or eat during the telehealth session. This is still a patient's appointment
5. **Preparation for Appointment**
 - Ensure patient has all necessary consents, forms, etc. completed before his/her appointment
 - Collect payment before the appointment
 - Share with your patient guides on taking intraoral photos/videos
 - Sometimes a patient's internet connection is slow resulting in an unclear video during a synchronous encounter. Recommend patient take photographs of their mouth and send to you rather than live-streaming if needed
6. **Patient Interaction**
 - Make eye contact with your patient and greet them with a smile
 - Introduce yourself and repeat the purpose of the appointment
 - Have the patient confirm their identity and that they are alone in their room
 - Check with the patient that they can hear and see you clearly
 - Get an appointment agenda with your patient, keep your recommendations concise, and elicit patient response to recommendations whenever possible
 - Document, document, document! This includes the duration of the appointment, topics discussed, and recommendations given
 - Make sure your patient has a way to follow up with you
 - Ensure you log out of the session completely

Compiled by Virginia Health Catalyst Clinical Advisory Board Members: McAlister Cataloz, DMD Horizon Health Center

COVID-19 RESOURCES | VIRGINIA HEALTH CATALYST | VAHEALTHCATALYST.ORG | APRIL 9, 2020

Patient Assessment via Synchronous Teledentistry

Created by Scott Howell, DMD, MPH

W TELEDENT

Patient assessment via synchronous teledentistry

Tips

- If the patient is using a computer:**
 - Have a light source behind the camera. As an alternative, have the monitor as bright as possible.
 - Bring the camera as close to the edge of the table as possible. (This makes it easier to get closer to the camera if needed)
- If the patient is using a cellphone:**
 - Have a light source behind the phone.
 - Set the camera so it is propped up (for example, against a book, a beverage, and set close to the edge of the table).
 - Make sure the camera is in "landscape" mode.
 - If the patient is going to take photos, it is critical to the steps above to be sure to:
 1. Turn on the timer (recommended 5-17 seconds)
 2. Turn on the timer (recommended 5-17 seconds)

Helping the patient get comfortable with movements

Demonstrate each movement then have the patient practice.

- 01 Have them turn their head left and right. (Same motion as rotating your head to)
- 02 Have the patient tip their head left and right. (Bring your right ear to your right shoulder and your left ear to your left shoulder)
- 03 Have the patient move their head up and down. (This is a stretching up and tilting down like motion)
- 04 Have the patient tip their head up and down. (Same motion as nodding your head up)

For updated materials, visit Catalyst's COVID-19 [resource page](https://vahealthcatalyst.org).

Recommendations for Using Teledentistry During COVID-19

Standard of Care

It is important to remember that when providing care via teledentistry, whether communicating with a new patient or an established patient with a new concern, a provider should still take the steps to ensure a complete picture of the patient's overall health. This includes obtaining an accurate, recent medical history, history of the patient's current chief complaint, and any possible visual aids from the patient (e.g., a photograph of the area of concern). Patients should still complete new patient registration forms to the best of their abilities, including submitting insurance and/or payment information, HIPAA notifications, any modifiers that are being utilized during this pandemic, consent for treatment with an understanding care provided via teledentistry is likely not definitive, and other relevant documentation.

[Teledentistry Documentation Recommendations](#) (Teledent)

Plan for Minimum Interactions (should an in-person visit become necessary)

Providers will need to plan for efficient in-person emergency visits should those be necessary. The goal is to have all information, explanations, payments, consent, etc. exchanged or completed prior to the patient arriving at the dental office. This will minimize the time in a public space (i.e., the dental office). The goal is completion of very short appointments that can effectively manage the patient's major concerns.

How to Engage Non-emergent Dental Patients

Teledentistry is also useful to continue dental care and manage oral health goals with all patients during a crisis. Even before the pandemic, providers strived to engage and educate all patients and communities on the importance of oral health; it is important to continue supporting patients during self-quarantine so providers are prepared to welcome them back when restrictions are lifted. Here are a few easy ways to engage patients:

- Discuss "at home" strategies with patients, i.e. ways to improve at home cleaning, prescription toothpaste, dietary changes, germ control.
- Help identify the patient's values and goals through [motivational interviewing](#) and help patients develop self-management goals to work towards total health.
- Ask patients about their overall physical and mental health. Be prepared to share additional resources to support your patient's total health and connect them with social support services (i.e. food banks, housing support, mental health counseling)

Be respectful if oral hygiene/oral care is not a patient's top priority right now. Patients may be dealing with recent unemployment, child care challenges, or illness (either their own or a loved one). Remind patients that their providers are still available for consultation via phone or secure video to discuss any concerns, answer home care questions, etc.

Updates to Laws and Regulations

Legal Requirements

Teledentistry does not change scope of practice or supervision; it *does* enhance how dental practices provide care. In Virginia, to practice teledentistry a provider must hold an active Virginia dental license, they must receive an informed consent form from the patient before beginning a virtual visit, and they must document all virtual discussions with the patient in the EDR. These [ADA Guidelines](#) offer sample language for informed consent forms for virtual services.

HRSA does not require approval for teledentistry program implementation at an FQHC.

Changes to HIPAA

The federal government will waive potential penalties for HIPAA violations against health care providers who serve patients in good faith through certain everyday communication technologies during COVID-19. Covered health care providers may use popular applications that allow for video chats, including Apple FaceTime, Facebook Messenger video chat, Google Hangouts video, or Skype to provide service via teledentistry during this time. HIPAA's relaxed legislation will only be applicable during the COVID crisis. Providers are encouraged to notify patients that third-party applications potentially introduce privacy risks, and providers should enable all available encryption and privacy modes when using such applications.

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Teledentistry Dos and Don'ts for Dental Providers

Do engage with your patients regularly even if you cannot provide in-person care at this time. This can include a “dental wellness check” and the opportunity to discuss at-home care strategies.

Do have available resources for your patients, including guides on how to communicate via teledentistry as well as at-home care strategies to maintain their oral health.

Do respect your patient's decision to not prioritize their oral health at this time. It is important to remind your patient you are present and available for when they are ready to return to care.

Do confirm your patient's identity, whether this is a new patient or an established patient, before commencing teledentistry services.

Do not utilize a third party non-HIPAA compliant platform without informing your patients of the risks associated with this mode of communication.

Do ensure you can collect all necessary information including a complete health history, history of patient's chief complaint, necessary visuals of the chief complaint area, as well as informed consent to provide care via teledentistry before providing consultation and or prescriptions.

Do remember to document all findings, discussion, images shared, etc. This is still a service you provided to your patient and must be included in his/her dental record.

Do use Smiles for Children guidelines to appropriately code care provided.

Do remember to follow up with your patients appropriately. As the care provided through teledentistry will likely not be definitive, a virtual follow up or subsequent scheduling of in-person treatment may be required.

Do not provide any service outside your scope of practice as defined by the Virginia Board of Dentistry.

Do connect your patient with other community services that may be helpful during the crisis, such as local food banks, mental health resources, etc.

For more information on teledentistry during COVID-19 and for additional resources visit Virginia Health Catalyst's COVID-19 resource page at: <https://vahealthcatalyst.org/covid-19-resources/>