Summary
TriWest has worked in collaboration with the Department of Veterans Affairs’ (VA) Office of Community Care to facilitate Telehealth capabilities in the Behavioral Health community. Given the surge in demand among providers and Veterans due to COVID-19, TriWest has expanded the scope of Telehealth services beyond Behavioral Health. TriWest has been capturing which providers have telehealth capabilities in appointing systems to quickly identify and appoint to these providers if a Veteran prefers a telehealth appointment.

Important Details:
- Telehealth services may be provided through Patient-Centered Community Care (PC3) and Community Care Network (CCN) utilizing current Medicare guidelines.
- Providers can bill using the Medicare telemedicine methodology and guidance during COVID-19 to be paid at the face-to-face rate.
- TriWest will pay the providers’ claims for the Telehealth services if there is an authorization on file (except Urgent Care where no authorization is required), the scope of services are appropriate for a Telehealth visit (no physical procedures are billed that would require face-to-face delivery of care), and the claim is consistent with Medicare guidance for place of service and modifiers.
- The CPT codes on the SEOCs do not need to include any additional telehealth specific codes for a telehealth claim to be paid.
- Telehealth is an option for community care appointments under PC3 and CCN for both initial and follow-up appointments as appropriate for the referred condition. It can be used as needed along with face-to-face care where some physical evaluation or procedures are required.

Special Considerations
When appointing for Telehealth, extra considerations should be made. Below are questions TriWest asks Veterans to determine Telehealth capabilities and comfort level:

- “What care are you comfortable receiving via telehealth?”
- “Do you have a secure (i.e., password-protected) Internet connection?”
• “Do you have either a webcam with a microphone on your computer or front-facing camera on your tablet/smartphone?”
• “Are you comfortable, able and willing to download a Telehealth application and/or other Telehealth information to your device?”
• “Do you have a room or location in your home that will allow you privacy for your Telehealth session?”
  o If Veteran does not have a private location, then ask, “Are you interested in a point-to-point location?”
  o A point-to-point location would involve the Veteran commuting to an originating site (usually a small clinic or health center) and attending their telehealth session there via high-speed network with a distant telehealth provider.

Guidelines

To ensure a positive experience for the Veteran, please adhere to the following guidelines:

• The Veteran MUST be dressed appropriately for the session.
  o Inform the Veteran that this session is no different than that of a face-to-face appointment. Inappropriate clothing or lack thereof will result in termination of the session.
• All weapons must be secured prior to the session to avoid any inadvertent cause for alarm.
• The Veteran MUST have a space to perform the Telehealth session that is private, safe, and secure. This is to protect the Veteran’s privacy.
• Should the Veteran become uncomfortable during the session and wish to return to community based face-to-face care, they are allowed to do so at any time.
  o A new authorization will be required as this will be considered a new consult.
How to Appoint to a Telehealth Provider Using the TriWest Provider Directory

Step 1: Determine Veteran Preferences

- When collecting the Veteran preferences for receiving care in the community, ask if they prefer a telehealth appointment with a provider.
- If the Veteran does not prefer a telehealth appointment, follow the normal face-to-face appointing process.

Step 2: Log In to the TriWest VA Portal

- Click on the Provider Directory as indicated by the red arrow to go to the Provider Directory search tool.
  - Note: The above screenshot is from the PC3 VA Portal, the CCN version of the portal will have a different menu layout, but the tool will remain the same.
- If you are unable to access the TriWest VA Portal, contact your VAMC Portal Administrator or the Office of Community Care (OCC).

Step 3: Using the Provider Directory Tool / Areas of Interest

- When using the Provider Directory Tool, try to limit as few fields as possible when you search. It is best to leave fields defaulted and enter the required fields of Specialty Group and Areas of Interest. If you receive too many results then you can do the search with small incremental changes to other fields to avoid over filtering the information and having no results.
• Select the appropriate **Specialty Group** depending on what type of care is required.

![Image of a dropdown menu for selecting specialty groups]

• Go to **Areas of Interest** and click the drop-down arrow. Remove the checkmark for **All Areas of Interest** and select the appropriate AOI. Selecting more than one AOI will result in a broader array of results. Areas of Interest, or AOIs, are TriWest’s notes placed on a provider by location. It is recommended to verify the provider can deliver the service before accepting their appointment information for a Veteran.

![Image of a table with AOIs categories]

• **Key Areas of Interest** – These AOIs are used to assist appointers in effectively scheduling referrals to a telehealth provider’s preferences in a timely manner.
  
  - **TH – Telehealth [State Abbreviation]** – These are typically Behavioral Health providers that are licensed in a specific state, indicated by the abbreviation
  
  - **TH – Telehealth COVID Available** – These are providers that have indicated they have telehealth services temporarily available through the duration of the COVID pandemic
  
  - **TH – Point to Point** – Indicates that the site will support a Veteran to connect to the provider via another commercial location and may provide peripherals for conducting physical exams

• **Searching for a Provider** – Given the rapid scale of telehealth capabilities within the community for Medical/Surgical providers, TriWest maintains two processes for finding Behavioral Health and Medical/Surgical providers. See below instructions on how to search for each provider type:
  
  - **Behavioral Health** – To search for a Behavioral Health Telehealth Provider, you will want to search on the following criteria:
    
    - Step 1: Select the appropriate **Specialty Group**
Step 2: Select the **Telehealth AOI** for the state in which Veteran is located.
- For example, for a referral that requires psychotherapy care for a Veteran that is located in Arizona, the appointer would select “Behavioral Health Psychotherapy” in the Specialty Group field and “TH – Telehealth AZ” in the AOI field.
- Within the Areas of Interest field, select a sub-speciality if you believe the specialty field is too broad (i.e., any item that begins with BH).

Step 3: Filter on **Program Type** to select PC3 or CCN (depending on what VAMC you are located in).

Step 4: Click **View Report** to generate results and review the provider’s information in full to make the best selection.

**Medical/Surgical** – To search for a Medical/Surgical Telehealth Provider, you will want to search on the following criteria:
- Select the appropriate **Specialty Group**.
- Select **TH – COVID Available** in the Area of Interest field.
- Select the state in which the Veteran is located in the **State** field.
- Filter on **Program Type** to select PC3 or CCN (depending on what VAMC you are located in).
- Click **View Report** to generate results and review the provider’s information in full to make the best selection.

Example: A search result for Behavioral Health providers in Arizona that have telehealth capabilities:
Example: A search result for Physical Therapists in Arizona that have telehealth capabilities:

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>City, State</th>
<th>Phone/Fax</th>
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<tr>
<td>Allegro, Kelly L, PT</td>
<td>505 S Washington St Ste 125</td>
<td>Phoenix, AZ</td>
<td>602-277-1016</td>
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<tr>
<td>Program Network Provider</td>
<td>Touchstone Rehabilitation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Accepts New Patients Yes</td>
<td>NR: 1134580137</td>
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<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>Aquatic Therapy - M S</td>
<td>TH-Telehealth COVID Available</td>
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<tr>
<td>Areson, Nash B, PT</td>
<td>4885 E Baseline Rd Ste 114</td>
<td>Mesa, AZ</td>
<td>480-544-3004</td>
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<td>Program Certified Provider</td>
<td>Contact Physical Therapy</td>
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<td>Accepts New Patients Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bednar, Albert J II, DPT</td>
<td>1255 W 6th St Suite 167</td>
<td>Tampa, FL</td>
<td>813-403-4000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Program Certified Provider</td>
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**Step 4 (Behavioral Health Only):**

Once a provider is found on the Provider Directory that meets all of the requirements for the referral, VA appointers can review the Area of Interest information for any AOI that may indicate a specific appointing requirement:

- AP – Telehealth Appoint by Email – Indicates a provider must receive appointment requests through a specific email process that may or may not involve a form
- AP – Telehealth Appoint by Fax – Indicates a provider must receive appointment requests by fax and may or may not involve a form
- AP – Telehealth Appoint by Phone – Indicates a provider has submitted appointing preferences to receive appointment requests by phone
- AP – Telehealth Appoint Online – Indicates a provider has a web-based scheduling system for directly appointing care

If any of these Areas of Interest are listed, the provider will not respond to the appointment request based on assigning it in HSRM alone. To successfully appoint to these providers, follow the guidelines in the TBH Directory Instructions/Data Dictionary.