

**An Important Message from  
The Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC)**

**Update to Clarify Delivery of Certain Behavioral Health Services  
through Synchronous Audiovisual or Synchronous Telephone (Audio-  
Only) Technology**

**Background:**

In response to House Bill (HB) 4, 87th Legislature, Regular Session, 2021, the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) allowed the use of telemedicine and telehealth, to include the use of synchronous telephone (audio-only) technology, to deliver many behavioral health Medicaid services on a permanent basis if clinically appropriate and safe and agreed to by the person receiving the services, effective September 1, 2022.

HB 4 built on Senate Bill 670 from the 86th Legislature, Regular Session, 2019 which prohibited Medicaid and CHIP health plans from 1) denying reimbursement to health care providers for a Medicaid service or procedure solely because it was delivered by telemedicine or telehealth, and 2) denying or reducing reimbursement to health care providers for a Medicaid service or procedure based on the health care provider's choice of platform.

This notice provides information about updates to most of the behavioral health Medicaid benefits to clarify delivery of those services through synchronous audiovisual or synchronous telephone (audio-only) technology.

**Key Details:**

Effective December 1, 2023, the Texas Medicaid & Healthcare Partnership (TMHP) will update the Texas Medicaid Provider Procedures Manual (TMPPM), Behavioral Health and Case Management Services Handbook (Vol. 2, Provider Handbooks) to clarify language for the delivery of mental health targeted case management (MHTCM), mental health rehabilitative (MHR), outpatient mental health, peer specialist, and substance use disorder (SUD) services through synchronous audiovisual or synchronous telephone (audio-only) technology.

In this update, references to provider, treating provider, or same provider will be replaced with billing provider or same billing provider, as applicable.

Same billing provider will be defined as providers within the same entity or organization as identified by the entity's or organization's National Provider Identifier (NPI) number or numbers if the entity or organization has multiple locations.

This update will also add language to clarify the in-person or synchronous audiovisual 6-month and every rolling 12-month requirements for providing services through synchronous telephone (audio-only) technology. The updated language will specify:

- The MHTCM, MHR, outpatient mental health, peer specialist, and SUD services that may count toward the requirements.

- The requirements may be delivered by another authorized professional or paraprofessional of the same billing provider as the one that renders services by synchronous telephone (audio-only) technology.

**Resources:**

- Information about outpatient mental health, MHTCM, MHR, peer specialist and SUD services is published in [\*Behavioral Health and Case Management Services Handbook \(Vol. 2, Provider Handbooks\)\*](#) in the TMPPM.
- TMHP bulletin: [\*TMPPM Update to Clarify Delivery of Certain Behavioral Health Services Through Synchronous Audiovisual or Synchronous Telephone \(Audio-Only\) Technology\*](#) published on October 13, 2023.
- TMHP bulletin: [\*HB4: Behavioral Health Services Delivered by Telemedicine or Telehealth Effective September 1, 2022\*](#) published on July 15, 2022.

For questions, please contact the Medicaid and Dental Benefits general mailbox at [medicaidbenefitrequest@hhsc.state.tx.us](mailto:medicaidbenefitrequest@hhsc.state.tx.us)