

OPTOMETRY BULLETIN

May 29, 2020

Important Information on Non-Face-to-Face Services Provided During Pandemic.

In view of the COVID-19 pandemic, current Public Health Order, and recommendations for social distancing and in order to promote continued delivery of patient care as seamlessly as possible, optometrists may claim for the following services when they are provided non-face-to-face (via telephone or *Personal Health Information Act* [PHIA] compliant virtual care platform):

- 03.03 CNTC
- 03.03 CCDX

These will be paid at the current tariff remuneration rates, consistent with current frequency limits. Eligible dates are March 25, 2020 to June 30, 2020.

Please submit your claims for encounters as you normally would, using your normal practice location. For all services not rendered face-to-face at that location, include the following text on the claim to denote the mode of synchronous care delivery:

- If the service was provided via phone call: **Pandemic telephone**
- If the service was provided over a PHIA-compliant virtual care platform: **Pandemic virtual care**

The service is not eligible for other forms of communication such as:

- Written, email, or fax communication
- Electronic verbal forms of communication that are not PHIA-compliant (e.g. Facetime, Skype, Messenger)

The communication must be two-way synchronous communication between the optometrist and patient (or their parent or guardian). The service may be claimed only when the communication is rendered personally by the optometrist claiming the service and not when rendered by other personnel such as office staff. A limited visit is permitted based on the professional opinion of the optometrist as to whether non-face-to-face care is appropriate for the service and diagnosis.

The service may only be claimed where communication is patient initiated. The non-face-to-face encounter must include a discussion of the immediate optometric problem and a treatment management decision.

The service may not be claimed if the decision is to see the patient at the next available appointment in the office.

Important Information on Non-Face-to-Face Services Provided During Pandemic (continued)

Non-face-to-face encounter may not be claimed when the purpose of the communication is:

- To arrange a face-to-face appointment without clinical consultation
- For administrative tasks only
- To notify the patient of an appointment

All encounters must be recorded in the patient record. It is recognized that the health record may not be available at the time of the call, but a note should be made and placed in the permanent record as soon as feasible. This should include the location of the provider (if other than the office) and the technology used to render the service.

The optometrist must be licensed and currently physically located in Nova Scotia.

Non-face-to-face care is not eligible for premium fees.

At this time, DHW is making licenses for the PHIA compliant Zoom Healthcare available free of charge, for one year, for optometrists. To obtain a license go to: <http://www.cdha.nshealth.ca/telehealth-zoom/zoom-healthcare>

Following a description and technical requirements, towards the bottom, there is a link **For NON-NSHA/IWK** users, you will need to complete this [Zoom for Healthcare Request Form](#).

From that same initial link, there is also an Orientation package and other Training resources available.