

# OPTOMETRY BULLETIN

## May 27, 2022

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

Effective May 27, 2022, new modifiers now available to denote when a service is conducted via either telephone or PHIA-compliant virtual care video platform. These services will be paid at the same rate as they would be if delivered face to face.

Utilizing these new explicit modifiers do not require manual entry of text on each claim to denote the mode of virtual care.

The new modifiers are as follows:

- **AP=PHON** – Encounter occurred via telephone
- **AP=VIRC** – Encounter occurred via virtual care video platform

The new modifiers apply to:

- **03.03 CNTC, SP=OPTO, LO=OFFC**
- **03.03 CCDX, SP=OPTO, LO=OFFC**

The encounter must be two-way synchronous communication between the optometrist and patient (or 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. The service 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 when patient initiated. The non-face-to-face encounter must include a discussion of 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.

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
- To inform the patient of the results of diagnostic investigations with no change in management plan

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. The patient must also be physically located in Nova Scotia.

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