

## Virtual Encounter Guidance during COVID-19 National Emergency

Medical Coding Program Branch

Effective: 08 April 2020

### UPDATED 08 APRIL 2020:

During the Coronavirus Disease of 2019 (COVID-19) National Health Emergency, the DHA Medical Coding Program Branch (MCPB) is issuing this guidance for documenting and coding all virtual clinical encounters. This guidance applies to both new and established patients in all clinical services. This guidance does not apply to administrative type t-con encounters; see Chapter 5, and Appendix J, in the Military Health System (MHS) Specific Coding Guidelines for further guidance.

1. If the Military Medical Treatment Facility (MTF) is open and conducting normal clinical operations, continue as currently with no change.
2. If the MTF is open, but is restricting access for patients that can be treated virtually the process is as follows:
  - a. By telephone only.
    - i. Document as normal for the appropriate encounter type (not in t-con module) to include history, any counseling, assessment and plan, and disposition.
    - ii. Assign the diagnosis(es) as appropriate.
    - iii. Assign any procedure performed as appropriate (include time for time-based CPT codes).
    - iv. Assign **T2025** in the procedure (Healthcare Common Procedure Coding System HCPCS)) to indicate that the services were provided by telephone.
    - v. Assign Evaluation and Management (E/M) service as appropriate if rendered.
  - b. By synchronous visual (video) and audio telecommunications.
    - i. Document as normal for the appropriate encounter type to include history, exam if done, any counseling, assessment and plan, and disposition. Include time spent during encounter if required by service performed.
    - ii. Assign the diagnosis(es) as appropriate.
    - iii. Assign any procedures performed and documented (e.g. psychotherapy, PHQ-9, etc.).
    - iv. Assign appropriate E/M service if performed, otherwise assign **99499** or leave blank.
    - v. Apply virtual encounter modifier to encounter (**GT**=MTF to MTF, or **95**=provider to patient location other than MTF).

**This guidance is valid until further notice from the DHA MCPB.**