



07-17

**OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE
ALL-EMPLOYEES MEMORANDUM**

DATE: April 10, 2017

ALL-EMPLOYEES MEMORANDUM

**EMPLOYEE MEDICAL HEALTH PLAN (EMHP) OF SUFFOLK COUNTY
IMPORTANT CHANGES REGARDING YOUR
MENTAL HEALTH BENEFITS**

**IMPLEMENTATION OF TELEPSYCHIATRY BENEFITS
(Effective July 1, 2017)**

As part of our continuing effort to provide our members with important updates regarding the Employee Medical Health Plan of Suffolk County (EMHP), the Labor/Management Committee, which oversees the EMHP, would like to provide you with important information regarding your mental health benefits; specifically, the implementation of Telepsychiatry as a covered benefit, effective **July 1, 2017**. The Office of Mental Health defines "Telepsychiatry" as: "two way real time interactive audio and video equipment to provide and support clinical psychiatric care at a distance." Such services do **NOT** include a telephone conversation, electronic mail message or facsimile transmission between a program and a recipient, or a consultation between two professionals or clinical staff. The benefit is not limited to the services of a psychiatrist. **The new benefit applies to outpatient treatment only.**

The details and coverage parameters of the telepsychiatry benefits are outlined in the chart on the reverse side.

Dennis M. Cohen
Chief Deputy County Executive

Distribution:
One copy per employee/retiree

Mental Health – Telepsychiatry Benefits (Effective July 1, 2017)

Coverage of any telepsychiatry benefits is conditioned on the services rendered being medically necessary and the provider being licensed in the state in which she/he rendered said services.

| | Network | Non-Network |
|---|--|--|
| Outpatient: Mental Health Services (Telepsychiatry) , subject to the criteria below) | Precertification required prior to 1st telepsychiatry visit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No deductible - After your \$20 copayment per visit, the plan pays 100% | Precertification required prior to 1st telepsychiatry visit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Annual deductible of \$500 per person - Plan pays 50% of reasonable and customary or provider's charge, whichever is less |
| Calendar Year Visit Maximum | 30 visits per calendar year combined for both network and non-network services. In addition, under no circumstances will non-network outpatient visits (e.g., office-based face-to-face visits, plus home-based face-to-face visits, plus telepsychiatry visits) exceed the non-network 30 visit per calendar year maximum. | |
| Circumstances allowing for coverage of Telepsychiatry | <p>Medically necessary telepsychiatry services will be permitted when the covered member's one-way trip (by motor vehicle) to the nearest outpatient provider of the needed specialty is greater than 30 miles from his/her:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary residence; or, • Dormitory/alternative housing for those away at school, college, or graduate school. <p>In addition, medically necessary telepsychiatry services will be permitted when the member is midstream in outpatient acute care mental health treatment and a move of the member's residence or, his/her attending provider's place of outpatient office-based services causes the one-way travel distance between the member's primary residence and his/her attending provider's office to be greater than 30 miles (by motor vehicle). The goal of this provision is to allow the member to continue his/her acute care treatment with the same provider and thus avoid disruption of care.</p> <p>NOTE: In no event will outpatient telepsychiatry be a substitute for care that requires a higher level of care (e.g., inpatient confinement, partial hospitalization, or intensive outpatient treatment).</p> | |
| Telepsychiatry Technology Criteria | <p>In order for telepsychiatry to be reimbursed, the telepsychiatry services must be provided via real time audio and video conferencing technology specifically: dedicated videoconferencing via telepresence systems; or, PC, laptop, tablet webcam technology equipped with speakers, microphone and PTZ (pan, tilt, zoom).</p> <p>Telepsychiatry services provided via telephone (mobile or landline) are permitted only when the member and/or the attending mental health provider do not have access to the videoconferencing technology described above.</p> | |
| Prescription Drugs via prescribing requirements via Telepsychiatry | Prescription drugs prescribed through telepsychiatry must be written by a licensed Psychiatrist and are covered subject to the guidelines, requirements, and limitations of the EMHP's outpatient prescription drug plan. | |