

## **FAQs: Pandemic Virtual Care Codes for Specialists - Consultations and Visits**

### **BILLING TIPS & INSTRUCTIONS:**

- This service is only billable by Saskatchewan licenced physicians providing services to Saskatchewan beneficiaries. It is not billable to out-of-province residents or reciprocally by out-of-province physicians.
- This service is only billable when performed by physicians. Nurse practitioners or registered nurses are not eligible for payment.
- This service cannot be delegated by the physician (e.g., to a non-physician employee or medical learner).
- Service is not eligible for any premiums or surcharges. As such, this service is not billable with premium locations (B, C, D, E, F, K, M, P).
- This service is only billable when direct care is provided by physician to the patient in real time via telephone or secure video platform – it is not billable for communication via texts or email or for administrative tasks.

### **Q1: Can you clarify that 'consultation' means a new patient and a 'visit' means a follow-up?**

A1: Consultation means a new patient who has been referred to you by another provider and 15 minutes or more of direct specialist-patient interaction is required. Visit means a follow-up visit or virtual services that requires at least 7.5 mins of direct specialist-patient interaction. Virtual care specialist services provided during the pandemic that are less than 7.5 minutes of direct specialist-patient interaction may be claimed under 510A – Pandemic Telephone Assessment or 515A – Pandemic Video Assessment.

### **Q2: Is there a reason why these new fees are not effective the 23<sup>rd</sup> of March, since that was the first day we were asked to do provide virtual care in place of in-person visits due to the pandemic?**

A2: March 24<sup>th</sup> is the start date of the next MSB physician bi-weekly pay run. Back dating the effect date any further creates a significant logistical problem for MSB to manually reassess and adjust claims that have been already been submitted & paid.

### **Q3: Can this be used for non-urgent consultations, such as those referrals already on our waiting lists from dates preceding the pandemic?**

A3: Yes, you may bill the temporary pandemic virtual care consultation service codes to referred patients during the pandemic (and for existing referrals preceding the pandemic) for diagnoses unrelated to COVID-19. At least 15 minutes of direct specialist-patient interaction is required. Consultations requiring physical in-person examination are not eligible for payment under Pandemic Virtual Care codes.

### **Q4: We book 6 months in advance. I would hope this would apply to patients that were previously booked as new consultations.**

A4: Yes, you may bill the temporary pandemic virtual care consultation service codes during the pandemic for patients who were booked preceding the pandemic.