



Quality Assurance Bulletin

Quality Assurance Unit

County of Los Angeles – Department of Mental Health

Jonathan E. Sherin, M.D., Ph.D., Director

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UPDATES TO “GUIDE TO PROCEDURE CODES FOR SPECIALTY MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES” EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2021

The Guide to Procedure Codes for Specialty Mental Health Services, hereafter referred to as the “Guide”, has been revised to address recently added telehealth procedure codes and Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) updates. Changes described in this Bulletin are effective for dates of services on or after January 1, 2021. The following is a summary of the updates made.

Inactive Procedure Codes:

- ✓ 99201 – E&M Office or Other Outpatient Services – New Client, Minor Severity
This Evaluation and Management (E&M) procedure code is no longer active and should not be used for any services on or after January 1, 2021. Refer to the information and chart below for replacement codes to use.

New Procedure Codes:

- ✓ 90882 – Non-Billable SSI Application Writing
For Directly Operated providers only, this is a non-billable procedure code that can be used to track time spent writing up the Social Security Income (SSI) application. Refer to the [Central Business Office \(CBO\) Bulletin DMH 16-032: Invoicing Social Security for Completing 1002s](#) regarding claiming for completing SSI applications.
- ✓ 99441 – Telephone E&M with Established Patients, 5-10 minutes
- ✓ 99442 - Telephone E&M with Established Patients, 11-20 minutes
- ✓ 99443 - Telephone E&M with Established Patients, 21+ minutes
These procedure codes should be utilized for E&M Medication Support Services provided to an established client over the telephone to either a client or parent/legal guardian. The selection of the procedure code is based on the length of the telephone call. Although this is a telephone specific procedure code, there is no need to utilize the SC modifier on the procedure code.

Changes in Evaluation & Management (E&M) Code Selection:

- ✓ The selection of the 99202 through 99215 E&M procedure codes has changed. For this series of E&M procedure codes only, the selection of the procedure code is now based on either 1) Level of medical decision-making or 2) Total time of the service. Refer to the Appendix in the Guide to Procedure Codes for additional information on how to make the determination.

Note: As a reminder, LACDMH has not implemented the prolonged service add-on codes for E&M services due to the complexity of the add-on codes and the lack of impact on Medi-Cal claiming. For this reason, the Guide to Procedure Code lists 99205 as 60+ minutes, 99215 as 45+ minutes and 99443 as 21+ minutes.

Other Notable Changes:

- ✓ Updated all “Methods of Delivery” to be consistent with procedure codes made available under the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency (PHE). The telehealth services added will continue to be covered beyond the end of the PHE.
- ✓ Telepsych as a method of delivery was reworded as Telehealth in order to be consistent with other documents.

The below table summarizes the “old” and “new” procedure codes usage:

What you did	Old Code	New Code
Provided medication evaluation and management over the telephone for an existing client	H2010SC	99441, 99442, or 99443
Provided medication evaluation and management face to face to a new client	99201	99202 or other appropriate E&M code based on medical decision making or time
Wrote and completed the SSI application (Directly-Operated Only)	00000	90882

For Legal Entity Providers, the Department will allow a three-month period to implement these changes for clients who have Medi-Cal, Medicare or Other Health Coverage (OHC) only. For these clients, claims may be submitted using the “old” procedure codes and instructions because there will be no impact on the outbound procedure code for Medi-Cal claiming to the State Department of Health Care Services. However, for Medi-Medi or OHC/Medi-Cal clients, claims should be held until the “new” procedure codes can be implemented in order to prevent over-billing to Medi-Cal.

If directly-operated or contracted providers have any questions related to this Bulletin, please contact the QA Unit at QualityAssurance@dmh.lacounty.gov.

cc: DMH Executive Management
DMH Administration Managers
DMH QA Liaisons
Legal Entity Executive Management

DMH Clinical Operations Managers
DMH Quality Management Division
DMH CIOB Managers
Legal Entity QA contacts