



## Home Telehealth Services Amendment #341 - Rep. John Mahoney

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**Language:** " provided further, that for purposes of longterm health care cost savings and enhanced patient care, the Commonwealth shall recognize telehealth remote patient monitoring provided by home health agencies as a service to clients otherwise reimbursable through Medicaid, provided that the funds authorized herein shall be short term reimbursement made through MassHealth."

~MassHealth and EOHHS Administration (4000-0300)

**Purpose:** Establish MassHealth reimbursement for home telehealth services provided by a home health agency, immediately providing cost savings and more efficient care.

**Background:**

- Telehealth is defined by the Health Resources and Services Administration as “the use of technology to deliver health care, health information or health education at a distance.”
- Telehealth has many different uses, but all help patients manage their own care, whether through remote vital signs monitoring, medication adherence, health coaching or otherwise.
- Telehealth and remote care management programs are not only proven to reduce admissions to hospitals and nursing homes, but also reduce the frequency of home health visits. Such services increase communication with physicians and caregivers, which contributes to the enhancement of care.
- Home health agencies’ use of telehealth is one of the premier ways to save costs and improve efficiency in today’s health care system. Medicare and some commercial insurers offer limited reimbursement for home telehealth, but many states (including Massachusetts) do not yet allow Medicaid reimbursement.
- The most prominent study of the efficacy of telehealth was from the Veterans Health Administration’s (VHA) health care system, a national study where CCHT (Care Coordination Home Telemonitoring) is a routine service offered by the VHA to veterans with chronic conditions.
- ♥ **VHA Study Results** from a cohort of 17,025 CCHT patients:
  - 19% reduction in the number of hospital admissions.
  - 25% reduction in bed days of care.
  - Mean satisfaction score rating of 86% after enrollment into the program.
  - At \$1,600 per patient annually, CCHT costs 87% less than VHA home-based primary care services.
- Results from more local sources include Partners, who reduced hospital readmissions by 48% with their Connected Cardiac Care Program where patients transmit weight, heart rate, pulse and blood pressure to their tele-monitoring nurse each day from their own homes.

**Cost:** This proposal is budget-neutral as costs will be offset by reducing nursing visits to the home, hospital readmissions, emergency room visits and by delaying or avoiding nursing facility admission. MassHealth would need sufficient time to formulate reimbursement methodologies, examples for which are available from many other states and responsibility for purchase/lease and maintenance of equipment would belong to CMS-certified home health agencies and NOT the state.

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