

Remote Therapeutics Monitoring



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REMOTE THERAPEUTICS MONITORING

Everything you need to know

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) released an update to the Medicare Physician Fee Schedule proposal (the “Proposed MPFS/Rule”) that formalizes a powerful new avenue of remote patient therapy known as Remote Therapeutics Monitoring (RTM).

Until now, RTM has largely acted as an addition to the more well-established Remote Patient Monitoring and Remote Physiological Monitoring systems from the regulatory framework perspective. As a quick refresher, Remote Patient Monitoring — as outlined by the CMS— is a subset of telehealth defined by the remote collection, transmission, evaluation and communication of patients' health data via electronic devices. Whereas Remote Physiological Monitoring is a subclass of CMS code classifications that denotes the same type of remote patient monitoring, specifically for Medicare beneficiaries with chronic long-term conditions.

Now, with the addition of five CPT codes - a uniform coding practice for medical services and procedures to streamline reporting and insurance claims - RTM will stand on its own as a formal medical service.

WHAT IS

Remote Therapeutics Monitoring

From a perspective of care, Remote Therapeutics Monitoring is the practice of using medical technology to monitor health conditions including, but not limited to, the cardiatric system, the musculoskeletal system, the respiratory system, therapy adherence, therapy response, and other biological systems in patients. And although the name suggests otherwise, RTM supports a variety of other remote monitoring services that differ from the physiological categories.

In fact, RTM can account for remote medical services including physical therapy, clinical psychology, speech-language pathology and occupational therapy. With the rise in remote-based medical services, those close to the telehealth and mHealth industry believe this branch of services will account for a majority of the insurance billings under the new RTM codes.

So, what does this mean for organizations in the telehealth and mHealth space?

Opportunity.



Telehealth and the Future of Medicine

Telehealth, the umbrella classification for remote healthcare services, has undergone a stratospheric rise in patient adoption following the rise of the COVID-19 pandemic that spread across the nation in March of 2020. This massive shift to remote healthcare services was captured by the FAIR Health's Monthly Telehealth Regional Tracker.

This platform references 31 billion private healthcare claim records to track telehealth services on a month-by-month basis. According to this telehealth tracker, telehealth claims increased 8,336% nationally between April of 2019 and April of 2020 - a staggering increase even before the impact of COVID-19 was fully felt by the American medical system.

In a recent study investigating the long-term use of telehealth services, the CDC found that once patients start to use telehealth services, they prefer to remain using these remote platforms rather than returning to in-person health services whenever available.



REMOTE THERAPEUTICS MONITORING

Business Opportunity at a Glance

With any new emerging technology or service, it's important to ask the question, "Does becoming an early adopter or innovator in this space offer a strong business opportunity?"

The data suggests that RTM is positioned to rapidly grow over the next few years providing tremendous value for early innovators in the RTM space. The growth within remote patient monitoring and patients' willingness to use devices to capture, assess and transmit medical information is a very strong indicator that the ecosystem of remote therapeutics has tremendous potential to grow in the coming months and years.

80%

According to a June 2021 MSI International survey, 80% of Americans are in favor of using remote patient monitoring, and nearly one-half are very favorable towards incorporating it into medical care.

(Source: MSI International)

30M

By 2024, remote patient monitoring services and tools are expected to reach 30 million U.S. patients, according to research from Insider Intelligence.

(Source: Business Insider)

23.4M

A survey conducted by Insider Intelligence showed that 23.4 million U.S. patients used remote patient monitoring services and tools in 2020.

(Source: Business Insider)

40.3B

The global telehealth market size reached USD 40.3 billion in 2020. The global telehealth market is primarily driven by the rising adoption of smart and advanced technologies in the healthcare sector.

(Source: Precedence Research)

How does RTM Differ from RPM?

There are some clear-cut similarities between RPM and RTM codes, however, some of the subtle differences play a major role in how healthcare professionals bill for RTM services.

One of the major differences is how data is collected. RTM codes monitor health conditions including the musculoskeletal system, the respiratory system, therapy adherence, and therapy response, and as such, allow non-physiologic ai data to be collected. Why is this important for clinicians billing as well and businesses entering the RTM space? RTM is intended to be illustrative rather than exhaustive in what is billable. The take-home – with RTM, there is a higher level of flexibility of what's covered by insurance related to RTM, incentivizing more clinicians to adopt RTM technologies, and providing more opportunities for businesses to enter the RTM market.

RTM as an mHealth Game-Changer

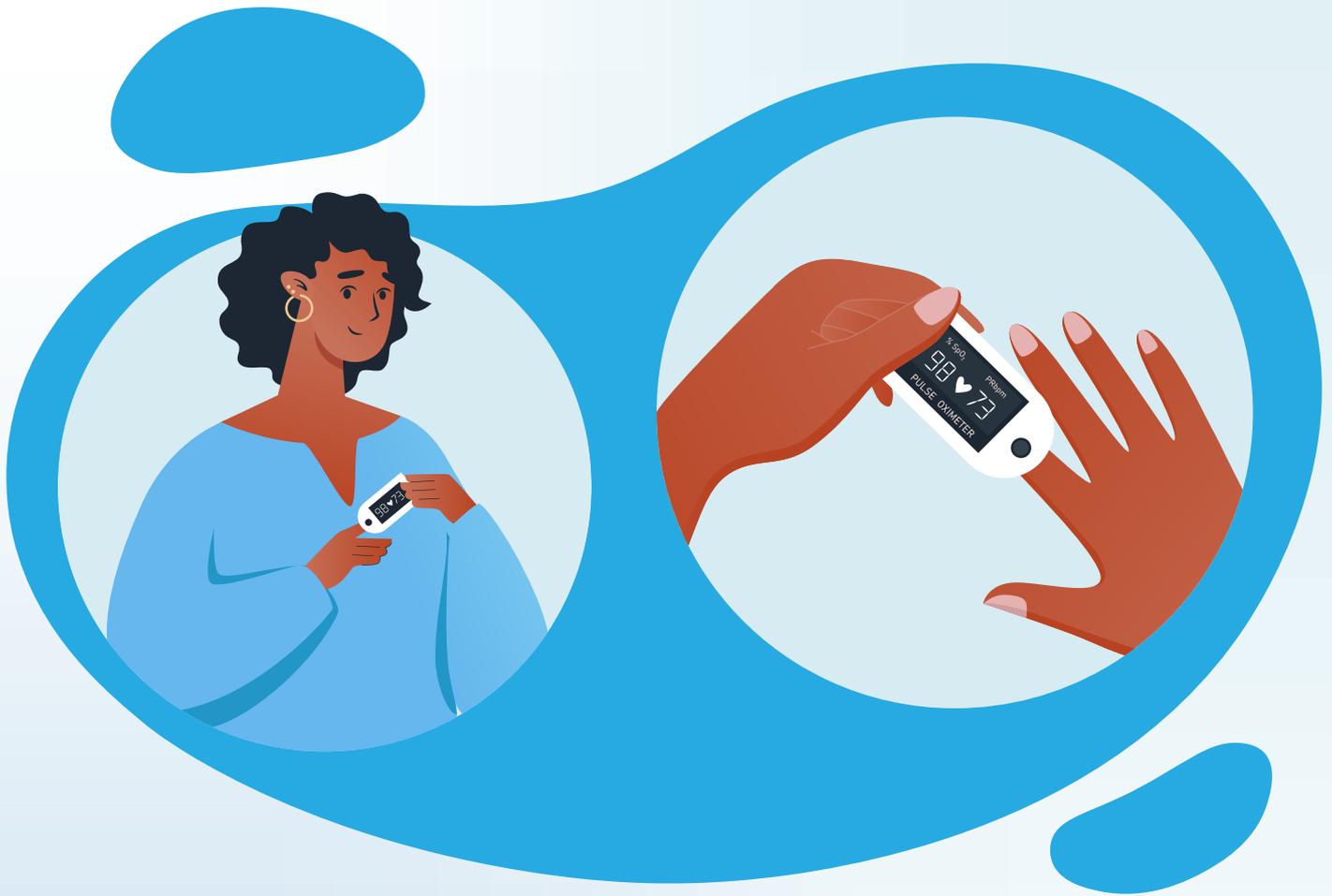
Even though the coding classification of RTM is early in its adoption within mHealth, there are already many future-forward applications being brought to the market. In the following section, we'll point out some revolutionary RTM applications that are positioned to greatly influence the mHealth ecosystem.

RTM for COPD

One emerging application for RTM is in remote therapy technologies for patients with pulmonary conditions such as COPD. These future-forward technologies are being used to record how frequently the patient is using their inhalers or other prescribed respiratory treatments, and remind the user to use the treatment based on the prescribed schedule by their physician. Now, with the help of RTM, doctors can gain more comprehensive analytics around a patient's COPD symptoms and offer more nuanced treatments specific to that individual.

RTM for Blood Pressure Cuffs

Blood pressure cuffs are another application where RTM can provide great value. Today, these cuffs calculate a patient's heart rate and blood flow by measuring changes in artery motion. Often, these measurements are done in a doctor's office and because of this, readings are infrequent. With RTM, patients can record their vitals remotely on a prescribed basis by their physician, providing much more data for doctors to monitor. This, again, will allow doctors to gain more comprehensive and nuanced data around the patient's health markers.



Pulse Oximeter

Pulse oximeters are a non-invasive medical technology that is used to monitor blood oxygen levels. These monitors clip onto a patient's finger and determine blood oxygen levels through pulsing ultraviolet light. With the help of RTM, pulse oximeters can be used to monitor patient blood oxygen levels remotely, helping doctors diagnose low oxygen saturation levels in patients. With the rise of COVID-19, this RTM technology is positioned to radically change how doctors monitor patients with COVID-19 remotely.

Remote Therapeutics Monitoring

From a regulatory standpoint, some interesting aspects of the newly proposed codes influence how businesses can approach innovating in the RTM space. The CPT codes released from the CMS closely resemble Remote Patient Monitoring (RPM) codes from a regulatory perspective; however, the slight differences in how these codes are defined make all the difference for organizations looking to bring RTM services to the market.

In short, the new set of codes are designed to be illustrative, rather than exhaustive, regarding what is considered a remote therapeutics monitoring technology or service.

Another major regulatory win for businesses in the telehealth and mHealth space is how clinicians can bill for RTM services. With the introduction of the new codes, remote clinicians such as therapists, psychologists and physical therapists can bill insurance for these services. Previously, the umbrella RPM codes limited these services to nurses and doctors, making it very hard for remote clinicians or technologies supporting remote clinicians to bill insurance.

This regulatory framework proposed by the CMS has a profound influence on how businesses in the telehealth or mHealth space can bring RTM products to market. Knowing there is a broader regulatory framework regarding RTM gives businesses the confidence that their solution will be protected under the CMS and likely covered by insurance agencies.

A Call to Action for Business

For those in the telehealth and mHealth space, now is the time to take action. With broader regulatory coverage, innovators in the telehealth and mHealth field have an opening. By introducing new technologies into the telehealth and mHealth industry that overlap with the adoption of remote therapeutics monitoring, a business can enter the market early and gain an advantage over competitors in the space.





DOGTOWN MEDIA

About Dogtown Media

Dogtown Media is a mobile media development company headquartered in Venice Beach, California with a presence in San Francisco, New York City, and London. Since 2011, our team of hardened techies has launched over 200 apps, and counting.

Our team is experienced in creating solutions for a wide range of platforms, including iOS, Android, HTML5 Web Apps and more. We offer specialized packages to satisfy a range of needs and budgets, from rapid prototyping for startups to full-featured interfaces for international enterprises.

If you're interested in learning how Dogtown Media can help introduce your next telehealth or mHealth app to the market contact us.

We'd love to help!



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Resource References

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