

# CLIENT ALERT

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## MICHIGAN EXPANDS TELEHEALTH COVERAGE

by Kimberly J. Ruppel

Although the current health pandemic resulted in a temporary relaxation of rules concerning remote healthcare services at both the local and federal levels, telehealth is undeniably here to stay. Michigan's Governor Gretchen Whitmer recently signed into law a set of five bills that will expand coverage of telehealth services.

Three of the new bills add "store and forward online messaging" as a covered telehealth service, removing the requirement that a patient and healthcare professional interact in real-time at the time services are provided. This change applies to claims submitted to private and state payers as well as for behavioral health encounters. Examples of "store and forward" information include photos, videos, x-rays or lab reports which a patient may transmit to a provider for consultation and treatment.

One of the new bills requires Michigan's medical assistance program and the Healthy Michigan program to cover remote patient monitoring services, defined as "digital technology to collect medical and other forms of health data" which is transmitted in a HIPAA compliant electronic format between patient and provider who are in separate locations. This type of telehealth service is useful in areas involving heart monitoring, glucose management, pregnancy, weight management, and elder care, among others.

Finally, beginning October 1, 2020, Michigan's medical assistance program and the Healthy Michigan program will allow coverage of telehealth services at additional "originating sites" which include a recipient's home or school in addition to other originating sites allowed by Medicaid.

For assistance in remaining compliant and up-to-date with the rapidly changing state and federal rules on telehealth or implementing a telehealth program with your business, reach out to your Dickinson Wright healthcare law attorney.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



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Kimberly Ruppel is a co-chair of Dickinson Wright, PLLC's Telehealth Task Force. She has over 20 years' experience as a commercial litigator who represents healthcare providers, insurers and benefit plans in matters related to healthcare litigation, licensing and regulatory disputes, governmental fraud and abuse investigations, HIPAA compliance, ERISA and insurance claims, coverage and fiduciary disputes, and class actions in state and Federal courts.