



Updated 05/08/2023 | Posted 05/29/2020

COVID-19: Updates to THSteps Remote Delivery of Medical Checkups – PHE Ending May 11, 2023

What is changing?

Effective for May 7, 2020, through the end of the federal Public Health Emergency (PHE) on May 11, 2023, the Texas Health and Human Services and Commission (HHSC) authorized telemedicine and telephone delivery for certain components of THSteps checkups for children over 24 months of age. Providers must use their own judgment to determine which checkup component(s) are appropriate for telemedicine or telephone delivery.

This guidance is **effective May 7, 2020, through the end of the PHE, on May 11, 2023**.

What are the requirements?

The federally mandated components by THSteps require the following for medical checkups:

1. Comprehensive health and developmental history, including physical and mental health and development
2. Comprehensive unclothed physical examination
3. Immunizations appropriate for age and health history
4. Laboratory test appropriate to age and risk, including lead toxicity screening
5. Health education, including anticipatory guidance

If a provider uses telemedicine or telephone delivery for one of the THSteps components, the provider must complete all other components (i.e. like immunizations and physical exams) with an in-person visit within six months of the telemedicine visit or telephone delivery.

Does this apply to everyone?

No. THSteps checkups for children from birth through 24 months of age are not permitted to deliver visits by telemedicine or telephone-only service.

How to bill:

- Use the appropriate initial visit as currently required by THSteps checkups.
- Add-on codes may be billed (e.g. developmental screening, mental health screening, etc.).
- Must use **modifier 95** when delivering remotely.
- Any component that was not completed during initial checkup, use COVID-19 as the reason for incomplete checkup.
- Use follow-up visit code 99211 for patients who are unable to complete any outstanding components and are seen within the six-month timeframe.
- THSteps checkup codes reimbursement will be identical to current rates.
- These guidelines apply to both new and established patients for both managed care and fee-for-service Medicaid.



BlueCross BlueShield of Texas

Three-Day Medical Exam:

- The Texas Department of Family Protective Services (DFPS) requires a three-day medical exam for children entering DFPS conservatorship. Telemedicine or telephone-only delivery is not permitted, regardless of age, **with one exception:**
 - Remote delivery is allowed **IF** a child requires quarantine or isolation at the time of removal due to COVID-19 exposure or diagnose as infected. Telemedicine, telehealth or telephone-only will be allowed to avoid the risk of transmission in a health care setting. Providers must document the detail circumstances which necessitated remote delivery. Providers must use modifier 95.

Additional Information:

The [American Academy of Pediatrics \(AAP\)](#) recommends strategies to ensure children over two years old receive age-appropriate vaccines in a timely manner. For example, a curbside/drive-through immunization clinic is recommended to ensure children receive vaccines in a timely manner.

As a reminder, a patient's home is not excluded as a THSteps site of service for medical checkups.

For more information about this notice and other changes to Texas Medicaid due to COVID-19, go to www.tmhp.com/Pages/COVID-19/COVID-19-HOME.aspx.

Questions?

Providers, for questions or additional information, please:

- Contact your BCBSTX Medicaid Network team at **1-855-212-1615**
- Submit via email [Texas Medicaid Network Department](#)