

Virtual Care: Providing world class pediatric care in the convenience and safety of your patient's home

"With [...] COVID-19 there is an urgency to expand the use of technology to help people who need routine care, and keep [people] in their homes while maintaining access to the care they need." (CMS, 2020)

Virtual care enables the diagnosis and treatment of patients through videoconferencing technology (similar to FaceTime or Skype). Virtual care is a broad term that includes:

- Virtual visits (also called telehealth)
- Store-and-forward services
- Virtual consults
- as well as many more remote healthcare services



Virtual Visits enable providers, patients, and their families to schedule and conduct appointments remotely without the need to be physically in the same place. This overcomes many barriers to healthcare access including the most recent desire and need to avoid clinical settings due to fear and risk of infection. Virtual care has been shown to increase efficiency, engagement and satisfaction in healthcare while also decreasing costs. In California, payors reimburse for telehealth in the same way they would for in-person care. Aside from controlled substances, which is subject to your medical group's interpretation of the law as well as your malpractice coverage provisions- prescriptions can generally be administered in the same way as in-person visits; the prescription of controlled substances likely requires a good faith in-person examination within a certain amount of time (e.g., one year). During the COVID-19 public health emergency, there are now exceptions to controlled substance prescribing. For more information, visit <https://www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/coronavirus.html>

How do they work?

It depends on which platform you choose from: Doxy.me, Zoom, KidsDoc or Anytime Pediatrics. In most platforms there are five key steps similar to an in-person appointment:

1. **Scheduling:** The patient/family schedules their appointment as usual. Confirm that your clinic has the parent's preferred email address on file.
2. **Pre-appointment:** Appointment reminders are emailed with a link/URL for the patient to access at the time of their appointment with a link to helpful FAQs and instruction.
3. **Joining the Appointment:** The patient/family join the *Virtual Visit* by following the link they have been emailed while you join the same link.
4. **Appointment:** During the appointment you follow your typical routine: introducing yourself (if the patient is new), reviewing symptoms, answering questions and discussing next steps. The major difference is that you should confirm consent to the virtual visit prior to the clinical part of the appointment: this is a verbal conversation that you can later document in the electronic medical record.
 - **Payment:** Virtual visit reimbursement varies by location, services, and payers. In general: **National payers (e.g., United Healthcare) follow Medicare guidelines.**

For additional questions regarding Virtual Care please email Felicia Hoodbhoy fhoodbhoy@chla.usc.edu