



The Medical Association is proud to share that we now have resources and information available 24 hours a day, seven days a week [for physicians](#) and the [general public](#) on our [website](#). In addition, we continue to advocate for access to the highest quality of healthcare for the people of Alabama – an urgent need in the face of this pandemic.

## **Telehealth in Alabama during COVID-19 Public Health Emergency (PHE)**

**prepared by Kim Huey, MJ, CHC, CPC, CCS-P, PCS, CPCO, COC**



**The Medical Association reached out to Kim Huey, a coding expert who provides guidance to many physicians in the state of Alabama, to help us navigate the most recent updates within coding and telehealth. She has graciously supplied the following information for our members.**

The most important thing to remember is that payers have differing definitions of what they consider telehealth. I recommend checking with the applicable insurer for the most up-to-date information affecting requirements for coding and billing of telehealth services.

A few things to ask about:

- What are the effective dates?

Most insurers are limiting this exemption to a specific period of time.

- What services are covered?
- How are those to be billed?
- Do we use telehealth codes or office visit codes?
  - What place of service?
  - What modifiers are necessary?
- For fee-for-service, traditional Medicare

**The information below pertains to the major payers in Alabama as of 3/18/2020 –**

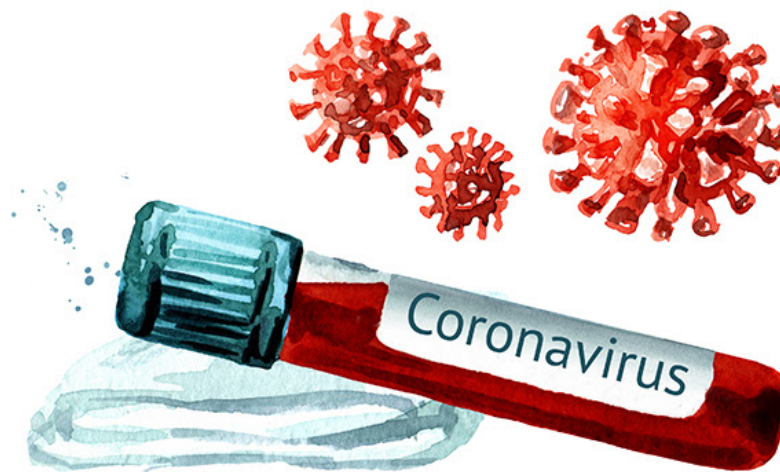
Blue Cross Blue Shield of Alabama is allowing providers to bill for phone call treatment of existing patients under the established patient office visit codes from 3/16/2020 – 4/16/2020. They are allowing codes up to 99213 with place of service code 02 (zero two) for telehealth.

No modifier is required. Many providers are concerned about reaching that level of service when no examination can be performed. Remember that established patient office visits require only two of the three key components – history, examination, medical decision-making. If the

physician documents an expanded problem-focused history and low complexity medical decision-making, 99213 will be supported. This must be the physician speaking with the patient, not the office staff.

[Read the full story on NewsCenter.](#)

**Questions? Email Kim here.**



## List of COVID-19 Testing Sites

As you know, a toll-free number began service over the weekend in order to direct Alabamians to testing sites for COVID-19 and was established as a joint effort between ADPH, the Medical Association and AlaHA. The call center staff has a script that changes daily to communicate where testing sites are available. The customer service operators are directed to ask if the patient has contacted his/her physician. If the patient doesn't have a physician, the operator directs them to the testing sites. If the patient has a physician and has not made contact with him/her, they are asked to make contact so that they can be triaged appropriately. The number was not set up to serve as a triage number, but to direct patients to their medical homes if they have them. The only reason a physician would need to have patients call the call center is to get an update on the list of testing sites. *\*Please note that this list is subject to change and physicians should instruct their patients to call the testing site before they go to make sure that the location and hours of operation have not changed.*

**Hale County Hospital**

508 Greene Street, Greensboro, AL 36744  
334-507-3815  
Hours: M-F, 8-5  
County: Hale

**COVID Collection Clinic**

500 Hospital Drive, Wetumpka, AL 36092  
Phone: Screening number is 334-514-3713  
Hours: M-F 7a/7p  
County: Elmore

**Baptist Health Coronavirus Care Clinic**

2936 Marti Lane, Montgomery, AL 36116  
located in the former Governor's House AFC PriMed facility on Southern Boulevard  
Call for appointment 334-747-0150  
7a – 7p, seven days a week  
Montgomery

**Whitfield Regional Hospital Coronavirus Collection Site**

105 U.S. Highway 80 East  
Site located on Walnut Street in hospital parking lot  
[covid19@bwwmh.com](mailto:covid19@bwwmh.com)  
9a-1p, 7 days a week

**Assurance Scientific Laboratories**

Church of the Highlands Grants Mill Campus  
4700 Highlands Way  
Birmingham, AL 35210  
Cars can line up starting at 6:30 a.m., Testing starts at 9:00

**DCH Regional Medical Center**

809 University Blvd., 35402  
large parking area just west of Dr. Edward Hillard Drive near the DCH laundry facility  
Tuscaloosa County

**RMC Health System Drive-Thru Screening Site**

230 East Tenth Street, Anniston, Alabama 36207  
(256) 235-5600  
Days of Operation: Monday – Friday  
Hours: 8:30 am – 4:30pm or until all slots have handled

**DeKalb Regional Medical Center POBs**

421 Medical Center Drive, SW, Fort Payne, AL 35968  
256-997-2708 (must call for appointment)  
M – F, 9 – 3:30  
DeKalb County

**Monroe County Hospital**

2016 South Alabama Avenue, Monroeville, AL 36460  
251-575-3111 (call first)  
6:30 a.m. – 5 p.m./everyday (as long as supplies last)  
County: Monroe Country

**The following sites only see patients from infants to 21 years old.**

<https://www.childrensurgent.com/coronavirus-what-you-need-to-know/>

<https://www.childrensurgent.com/telemedicine/>

**Urgent Care for Children - Birmingham**

500 Cahaba Park Circle, Suite 100, Birmingham, AL 35242

205-848-2273 (call first)

Hours: Weekdays 2pm – 10 pm , Sat – Sun 10am – 8pm

County: Jefferson

**Urgent Care for Children- Trussville**

[117 North Chalkville Road, Trussville, AL 35173](#)

205-848-2273 (call first)

Hours: Weekdays 2pm – 10 pm , Sat – Sun 10am – 8pm

County: Jefferson

**Urgent Care for Children - Vestavia**

[520 Montgomery Highway, Vestavia, AL 35216](#)

205-848-2273 (call first)

Hours: Weekdays 2pm – 10 pm , Sat – Sun 10am – 8pm

County: Jefferson

**Urgent Care for Children - Tuscaloosa**

[4700 Rice Mine Road Northeast](#)

205-614-5628 (call first)

Hours: Weekdays 2pm – 10 pm , Sat – Sun 10am – 8pm

County: Tuscaloosa

**Urgent Care for Children- Madison**

[8490 Highway 72 West, Suite 100, Madison, AL 35758](#)

256-724-3587 (call first)

Hours: Weekdays 2pm – 10 pm , Sat – Sun 10am – 8pm

County: Madison



## LATEST UPDATE FROM ADPH

Because Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) has been detected in Alabama; and it poses the potential of widespread exposure to an infectious agent that poses a significant risk of substantial harm to a large number of people, Alabama State Health Officer, Dr. Scott Harris, implemented a Statewide Social Distancing Order. During the Emergency, all elective medical procedures are ordered to be delayed.

Additionally, the order closes all preschools and childcare centers, except for those operated exclusively for the benefit of law enforcement, hospitals, ESRD Treatment Centers, EMS and state and local governments. The childcare center must be employer-operated and located on the premises for the exception to apply.

*NOTE: THE ORDER IS EXPECTED TO BE AMENDED SHORTLY TO INCLUDE ALL HEALTHCARE WORKERS. AS OF THE DATE OF THIS PUBLICATION, IT DOES NOT INCLUDE ALL HEALTHCARE WORKERS WHICH WILL INCLUDE PHYSICIAN OFFICE STAFF.*

**[See the full order here.](#)**

The informal guidance given as to what is, and what is not, elective is a reference to **[CMS Adult Elective Surgery Procedures and Recommendations](#)**, which sets forth factors to determine whether a planned procedure should proceed. The guidance comments

that the purpose is to conserve Personal Protective Equipment and limit exposure of the virus to patients and staff.



## DEA Guidance on Electronic Prescriptions for Controlled Substances

Because the Secretary of HHS has declared a public health emergency physicians may prescribe controlled substances to a patient in need via telehealth. "For as long as the Secretary's designation of a public health emergency remains in effect, DEA-registered practitioners may issue prescriptions for controlled substances to patients for whom they have not conducted an in-person medical evaluation, provided all of the following conditions are met," the agency clarified.

### Those conditions include:

- The prescription is issued for a legitimate medical purpose by a practitioner acting in the usual course of his/her professional practice
- The telemedicine communication is conducted using an audio-visual, real-time, two-way interactive communication system.
- The practitioner is acting in accordance with applicable Federal and State law.

Provided the practitioner satisfies the above requirements, the practitioner may issue the prescription using any of the methods of prescribing currently available and in the manner set forth in the DEA regulations. Thus, the practitioner may issue a prescription either electronically (for schedules II-V) or by calling in an emergency schedule II prescription to the pharmacy, or by calling in a schedule III-V prescription to the pharmacy.

[More details on the DEA's approach to electronic prescribing may be found here.](#)

## COVID-19 WEBINARS

### COVID-19 in the Ambulatory Care Setting

With the world in the throes of the COVID-19 pandemic, Rockpointe, a leading continuing medical education (CME) provider, will host their second live [CME-certified webinar on Friday, March 20](#), in an effort to prepare healthcare providers who work in an ambulatory-care setting to properly manage patients who present to their outpatient facility with symptoms of COVID-19.





The webinar, "[COVID-19 in the Ambulatory Care Setting](#)," is jointly provided by the Potomac Center for Medical Education (PCME) and the Maryland Nurses Association (MNA) and is designed to be a practical guide for clinicians who work in outpatient settings, such as ambulatory-care offices, clinics, or urgent-care facilities. This [free 1.5-hour webinar](#) will begin at 1 p.m. EST (noon CST / 10 a.m. PST). In addition, an enduring, interactive version of the content will then be available on-demand for 24 months on the [Rockpointe website](#).

[Register for this event here.](#)



The Medical Association of the State of Alabama has compiled resources for physicians and health care providers on the latest news, research and developments. [Check it out here!](#)



**COVID 19**  
CORONAVIRUS  
DISEASE

**CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019**  
(COVID-19)

**Patients with COVID-19 have reportedly had mild to severe respiratory illness. Symptoms can include**

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

**\* Symptoms may appear 2–14 days after exposure.**

**Seek medical advice if you develop symptoms, and have been in close contact with a person known to have COVID-19 or if you live in or have recently been in an area with ongoing spread of COVID-19.**

[www.cdc.gov/covid19-symptoms](https://www.cdc.gov/covid19-symptoms)

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#### STAY UP TO DATE

[World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#)  
[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#)  
[Alabama Department of Public Health](#)  
[Blue Cross Blue Shield Updates for Providers](#)

#### EDUCATE YOUR PATIENTS

[Information from the CDC](#)  
[Alabama Department of Public Health](#)



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