

## Telehealth Made More Accessible for Nephrology Patient



Important changes have been made by CMS to Medicare regulations for telehealth visits, which could be significant to your Nephrology practice. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic and public health emergency, patients may now participate in telehealth visits from their home, according to CMS.

Announced on March 17<sup>th</sup>, CMS is relaxing regulations related to Medicare payment for remote telemedicine. The most important change is that the **patient's home is now an approved originating site** of service. This will allow our patients to undergo exams, discuss issues and receive medical advice from their provider while remaining isolated and protected from COVID-19 risks.

In addition, telehealth visits will be available more broadly. CMS stated that they will not enforce previous regulations requiring patients who use the telehealth modality of care to only be established patients. **New patients may have telehealth visits** which are Medicare-approved.

A final change to recent telehealth regulations is the relaxing of enforcement of HIPAA rules when it comes to telehealth interactions between provider and patient during the COVID-19 nationwide public health emergency. Everyday communications technologies with video capability, including Skype and Facetime, may be used by physicians without concern for HIPAA penalties, if they are employed to provide telemedicine in good faith.

To read more about telehealth regulations and recent changes to them, visit <https://www.cms.gov/newsroom/fact-sheets/medicare-telemedicine-health-care-provider-fact-sheet>.

If you are ready to establish a long term telehealth infrastructure, call Tower Physician Solutions. Our IT team has the expertise to move your practice to the next level.