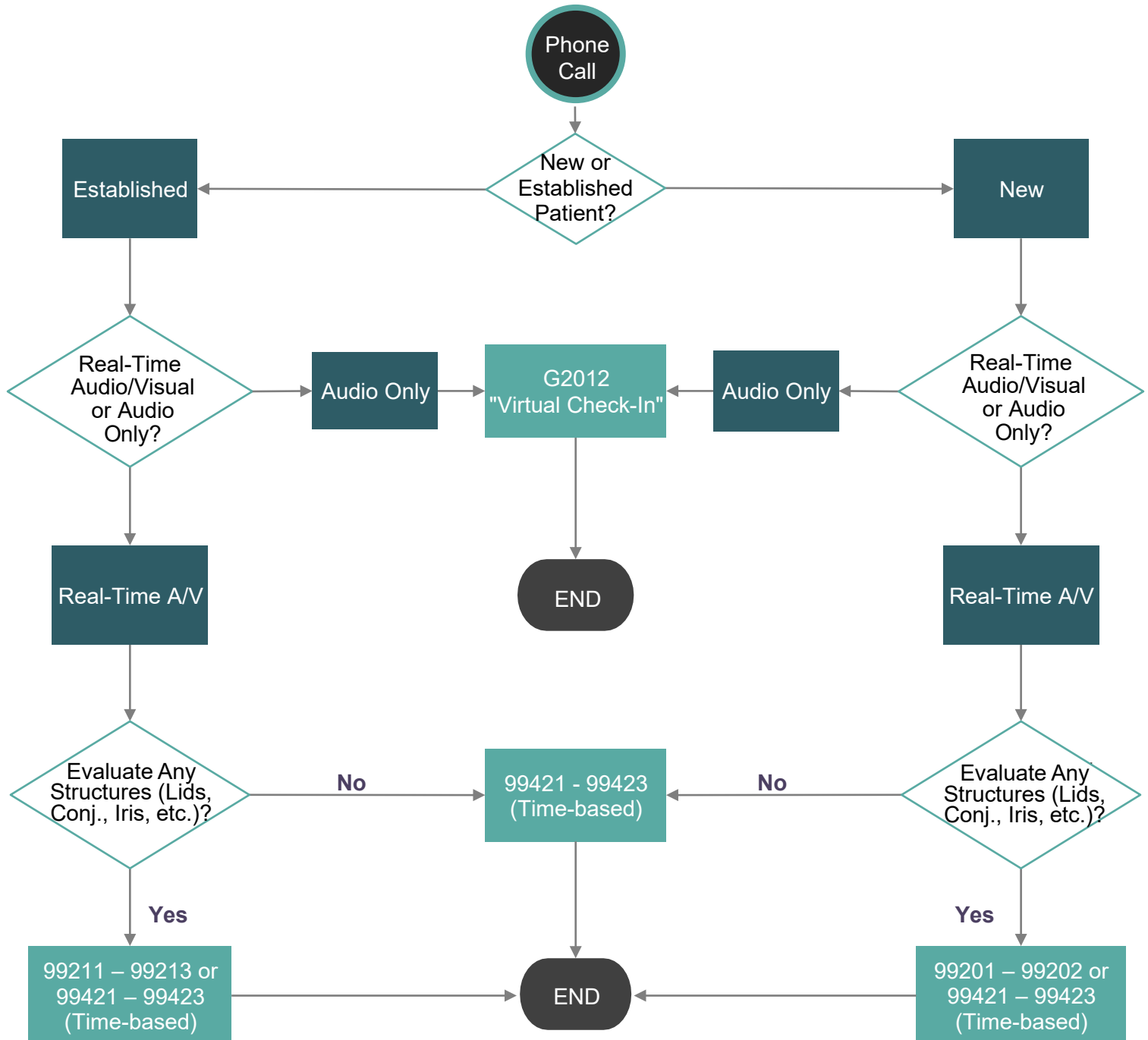


# TELEMEDICINE FLOW CHART & FAQs

3/26/20

As eye care practices are adapting and implementing telemedicine services, we have created the below flowchart and included FAQs to provide guidance and understanding around the coding associated with the delivery of telemedicine services. While the flowchart attempts to provide education regarding possible telehealth coding scenarios, it should not be used as the sole determining factor for code selection. Final code selection should be based on each patient's unique scenario and is at the discretion of the provider.

## TELEMEDICINE FLOWCHART – EYE CARE



## FAQs

### 1. WHAT TYPE OF CONDITIONS DO YOU EXPECT TO EVALUATE USING TELEMEDICINE SERVICES?

Below is a list of likely indications; however, the list is not all-inclusive.

- Acute problems (e.g., red eyes, irritated eyes, trauma)
- Dry eye
- Lid problems (e.g., chalazion, infections, inflammation)
- Chronic disease management (e.g., reviewing medication compliance, associated signs/symptoms, etc. for glaucoma)
- Cornea/conjunctival problems (e.g., foreign body sensation, pterygium, pinguecula)

### 2. WHAT DOES THE DIAMOND BOX “EVALUATE ANY STRUCTURES” IN THE FLOWCHART MEAN?

It's asking whether and/or what area(s) of the eye was examined using real-time audio/video. The 1997 single-system evaluation and management (E/M) guidelines for an eye exam includes these 12 elements:

- |                                |                     |                      |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Vision                      | 5. Lids/adnexa      | 9. Iris/pupils       |
| 2. Intraocular pressure        | 6. Conjunctiva      | 10. Lens             |
| 3. Confrontation visual fields | 7. Cornea           | 11. Retina (dilated) |
| 4. Extraocular muscles         | 8. Anterior chamber | 12. Mental status    |

It is possible to observe or capture several exam elements during a telehealth exam. There may be others, but the most likely elements are:

- |                                  |               |                              |
|----------------------------------|---------------|------------------------------|
| • Vision (near)                  | • Conjunctiva | • Cornea (gross observation) |
| • Extraocular muscles (versions) | • Iris/pupils | • Mental status              |
| • Lids/adnex                     |               |                              |

### 3. WHY ARE ONLY THE NEW E/M CODES 99201 AND 99202 LISTED?

Practically speaking, it is unlikely a telemedicine exam of the eye will capture more than six (6) to eight (8) of the 12 exam elements. If the exam includes six (6) exam elements, 99202 would be the most likely code for a new patient. An evaluation involving fewer than six (6) elements likely supports 99201. Nine (9) exam elements are necessary to support 99203.

### 4. WHY ARE ONLY THE ESTABLISHED E/M CODES 99211 - 99213 LISTED?

Again, it is unlikely that the exam will have more than six (6) to eight (8) elements. E/M 99213 requires six (6) elements. If fewer than six (6) elements are documented, 99212 is the likely level of service. However, it is possible to choose 99213 if supported by history and medical decision-making.

### 5. CAN WE USE TIME WHEN CHOOSING TRADITIONAL E/M CODES?

Yes, however, the time requirements for face-to-face interaction between the physician and patient are significant. For example, 99202 requires 20 minutes, and 99213 requires 15 minutes.

### 6. IF WE HAVE A REAL-TIME A/V CONNECTION, WHY WOULD WE EVER CHOOSE THE 9942X SERIES OF CODES?

If the A/V connection is too poor or the person using the camera has challenges, preventing any of the exam elements listed in FAQ No. 2 (above) from being examined or evaluated, the 9942x series is likely the best choice. Please note the 9942x series is based on cumulative time over seven (7) consecutive days.

### 7. WHAT ARE THE REIMBURSEMENT RATES FOR THE LISTED CODING OPTIONS?

CODES	2020 NATIONAL MEDICARE RATES
99201 (New E/M)	\$46.56
99202 (New E/M)	\$77.23
99211 (Est. E/M)	\$23.46
99212 (Est. E/M)	\$46.19
99213 (Est. E/M)	\$76.15

CODES	2020 NATIONAL MEDICARE RATES
99421 (Digital E/M, time)	\$15.52
99422 (Digital E/M, time)	\$31.04
99423 (Digital E/M, time)	\$50.16
G2012 (Virtual check-in)	\$14.80