

CODING BASICS

Digital Health Modifiers

Both the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and the CPT® Editorial Panel created modifiers that are added to in-person service codes to designate when the service is delivered via telehealth (either two-way interactive video or two-way interactive audio-only). **Note:** The AMA CPT Editorial Panel created stand-alone audio-only service codes in 2023. The CMS has decided not to adopt these new telehealth codes. Instead, modifiers will continue to be added to in-person services codes. ¹ Consult payer policy to learn which modifier is accepted.

- **CPT modifier 95:** This is used to designate that the service was provided via interactive videoconference. Modifier 95 is only for codes that are listed in Appendix P of the CPT manual. There is considerable overlap between situations for using GT and 95. ²
- **CPT modifier 93:** This designates that the service was provided via audio-only interaction. Modifier 93 is a synchronous telemedicine service via telephone or other real-time interactive audio-only telecommunications system. Synchronous telemedicine service is defined as a real-time interaction between a physician or other qualified health care professional and a patient located at a distant site from the physician or other qualified health care professional. ^{3 4}
- **CMS GT modifier:** This was created for remote services. The GT modifier remains relevant for certain settings and scenarios, particularly within rural health systems and Critical Access Hospitals (CAHs). ⁵
- **Modifier GQ:** This is used for telehealth services delivered via an asynchronous telecommunications system. Asynchronous telemedicine means that medical care is provided via image and video but not in real-time, such as store-and-forward. For example, a patient may undergo a service recorded as a video or captured as an image, and the provider evaluates it later.

There is an additional modifier that identifies a provider type:

- **Modifier FQ:** This designates that a service was provided as part of a federally qualified health center (FQHC) or rural health clinic (RHC) visit. ⁶

References

- 1 Alliance for Connected Care. (2024, July 1). Alliance for Connected Care opposes duplicate coding for telehealth services. Alliance for Connected Care Opposes Duplicate Coding for Telehealth Services. <https://connectwithcare.org/alliance-for-connected-care-opposes-duplicate-coding-for-telehealth-services/>
- 2 Medicare Learning Network. (2024.). MLN Fact Cheat- Telehealth Services. <https://www.cms.gov/files/document/mln901705-telehealth-services.pdf>
- 3 Maheu, M. (2024, January 17). Using the CPT code modifier 93 in audio-only telehealth - telehealth.org: Professional Training & Consultation. Telehealth.org | Professional Training & Consultation. <https://telehealth.org/cpt-modifier-93>
- 4 American Medical Association. (n.d). CPT® appendix T and modifier 93: Audio-only medical services. CPT® Appendix T and Modifier 93: Audio-only medical services. <https://www.ama-assn.org/practice-management/cpt/cpt-appendix-t-and-modifier-93-audio-only-medical-services#:~:text=Addition%20of%20Appendix%20T,-At%20its%20February&text=The%20codes%20listed%20in%20Appendix,1%2C%202022>
- 5 Medicare Learning Network. (2024.). MLN Fact Cheat- Telehealth Services. <https://www.cms.gov/files/document/mln901705-telehealth-services.pdf>
- 6 Maheu, M. (2024, January 17). Using the CPT code modifier 93 in audio-only telehealth - telehealth.org: Professional Training & Consultation. Telehealth.org | Professional Training & Consultation. <https://telehealth.org/cpt-modifier-93/>