

Insights on Telehealth Use and Program Integrity Risks Across Selected Health Care Programs During the Pandemic



The pandemic changed many aspects of our lives, including how we visit the doctor and other health care providers. Reliance on telehealth services skyrocketed during the first year of the pandemic, especially among federal health care programs. **This report shares insights about the use of telehealth in selected programs across 6 federal agencies: HHS, DoD, OPM, VA, DOL, and DOJ.**

All selected programs experienced dramatic increases in the use of telehealth during the first year of the pandemic:

37 million individuals used telehealth across selected programs, which is

13 times the number of individuals from the previous year.

\$6+ billion was paid by selected programs for telehealth services.

OIGs identified several **program integrity risks** associated with billing that were similar across multiple health care programs, such as:

- **duplicate claims**
- **high-volume billing**
- **inappropriate billing for the most expensive level of services**

Other findings:

There is limited information about the impact of telehealth on quality of care.

Programs lack some data necessary for oversight of telehealth services.



Safeguards that could strengthen program integrity for telehealth services



- **Additional monitoring of telehealth services**
- **Develop additional billing controls**
- **Educate providers and individuals**
- **Collect additional data**
- **Monitor the impact on quality of care**

These insights demonstrate the importance of ensuring the benefits of telehealth while minimizing the risk.