

Mandated report: Telehealth services and the Medicare program

ISSUE: The Commission has been mandated by Congress through the 21st Century Cures Act of 2016 to report on information about the extent to which the Medicare fee-for-service (FFS) program covers telehealth services, the extent to which commercial insurance plans cover telehealth services, and ways in which the telehealth coverage policies of commercial insurance plans might be incorporated into the Medicare FFS program. The Commission must deliver this report to Congress by March 15, 2018.

KEY POINTS: In this first installment of our work to fulfill this mandate, we provide background on Medicare’s current coverage of telehealth services, its applicable payment policies, and use of telehealth services by Medicare beneficiaries under the physician fee schedule.

ACTION: Commissioners should provide feedback on research directions and policy.