

HOW REMOTE PATIENT MONITORING ENABLES BETTER CARE AT LOWER COSTS.





introduction

With the technology available to healthcare practitioners today, there are a **variety of creative ways to provide outstanding care** to your patients. One of those ways is through the use of **Remote Patient Monitoring (RPM)**. And thanks to recent changes in coding and reimbursement from CMS, it's now easier than ever to get paid for caring for your patients from a distance.

In this eBook, we'll review Remote Patient Monitoring overall. We'll begin by exploring **what RPM is, the kind of technology it uses, and how it works**. From there we'll look at the **impact RPM has**, both on **providers and patients**, before digging into **RPM payment and reimbursement**. Finally, we'll discuss some methods for RPM use, including those **involving Medpod**, available through **Henry Schein Solutions Hub**. That's a great deal of ground to cover, so let's get started.

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what is **remote patient monitoring?**

Remote Patient Monitoring, often identified as RPM, **collects medical and health data from patients located outside of a medical facility using digital technologies, and transmits that information to providers securely for the purpose of assessment** and, as needed, action. RPM is particularly useful when monitoring patients who have recently been discharged from inpatient care or who have undergone a surgical procedure, as well as those with chronic illnesses. Through the use of RPM, physicians can **monitor data such as weight, vital signs, blood oxygen levels, blood sugar, and heart rate without requiring an in-person visit**. In doing so, providers are able to get a much clearer overall picture of their patients' health status, rather than the disjointed snapshots that providers have typically had access to based upon the frequency with which patients come in for appointments. Using RPM is also a **valid way to reduce the occurrence of hospitalizations as well as readmissions, as providers are able to identify potential health complications earlier and intervene before the situation becomes severe and necessitates inpatient care**.

There is a range of technology utilized for remote patient monitoring purposes, **from online platforms in which patients can input health data to handheld medical devices that will transmit data to healthcare providers**. Some specific examples include:

- Heart rate and blood pressure monitors
- Glucose meters
- Remote infertility monitoring and treatment
- Monitors that provide continuous surveillance for patients with conditions such as dementia to alert healthcare professionals in case of an event such as a fall
- Diet logging and caloric intake programs
- At-home testing for patients with substance abuse issues for accountability purposes

Regardless of the specific tools used, remote patient monitoring works by gathering health data from patients and transmitting that data to their healthcare providers. This **allows patients to be monitored more conveniently and keeps providers aware of their patients' condition between visits**. When providers

see a trend in patient data that signifies a condition may be developing, the provider can intervene with treatment before the condition can get worsens and requires a more intense reaction.



how does RPM impact providers?

Remote patient monitoring **has the ability to provide a few very important benefits to providers, the first of which is increased ease in accessing patient health data.**

Typically, providers have access only to disjointed snapshots of their patients' health, determined by how frequently those patients come in for a visit. **Even the most chronically ill patients may only visit once per month depending on their condition, giving the doctor access to that patient's vital health statistics one day out of thirty.** That's just not adequate to see how a patient is really doing, and a lot can happen in a month's time. With RPM, though, that same patient's health data can be transmitted to the provider daily, allowing for trends to be identified earlier and emergency situations to be avoided.

The next benefit of RPM use is the ability to provide more patients with a higher quality of care without facing burnout. There are only so many hours in a day and only so many open appointments. Many **providers simply don't have the time to give undivided, personalized attention to every patient in their population.** It's an unfortunate fact, but true nonetheless. With RPM, again, these patients are consistently monitored in their home and alerts can be sent to the provider when a trend in the patient's health data warrants attention. In that way, providers can offer that higher quality care, but without sacrificing their sanity.

Finally, all of this **adds up to lower health costs and higher levels of efficiency.** By reducing hospitalizations and readmissions, healthcare costs are kept down while patient health outcomes are increasing. **Being able to monitor all chronically ill patients without having to keep an active eye on them increases provider efficiency by allowing them to provide a higher level of care** than ever before without increasing the amount of time they spend actively monitoring patients. This is better for providers, of course, but is also a benefit to patients as well.



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how does **RPM** impact patients?

Obviously, when providers are able to be more attentive and effective, that's a benefit to patients, but the impact of RPM doesn't stop there. Remote patient monitoring also provides patients with better access to the care they need. It's been a major topic of discussion that with the increases in the number of insured patients in this country and insufficient growth in the number of healthcare providers, it's becoming more difficult than ever to have access to a caregiver. **There just aren't enough appointment times to accommodate the number of patients. By utilizing remote patient monitoring, many conditions can be addressed from a distance, leaving appointment times for situations that necessitate an in-person visit.**

Another benefit for patients is improved quality of care. Because the use of Remote Patient Monitoring connects patients more directly to their provider, keeping the flow of health data coming, **it allows physicians to provide better, more attentive care without disrupting their schedule or facing the possibility of burnout.** Additionally, the presence of RPM can increase patient engagement with their health, making them feel more accountable for their own care, and

helping them to make better, more responsible choices. These pieces all come together to create better quality of care and therefore, better health outcomes.

Assurance is another important benefit that patients in RPM programs will experience. Living with a chronic illness can be nerve-racking, **but the knowledge that someone is watching out for their well-being on a daily basis, someone who is qualified to recognize concerning patterns at an early stage and intervene,** is valuable to provide a feeling of security for these patients.

Finally, and along a similar line to the assurance of being looked out for, is the education, support, and feedback that patients receive through the use of RPM. **When patients are as connected to their providers as they are through RPM, the providers are able to get valuable information to their patients on a more regular basis, ensuring that patients understand their condition and how best to manage it.**

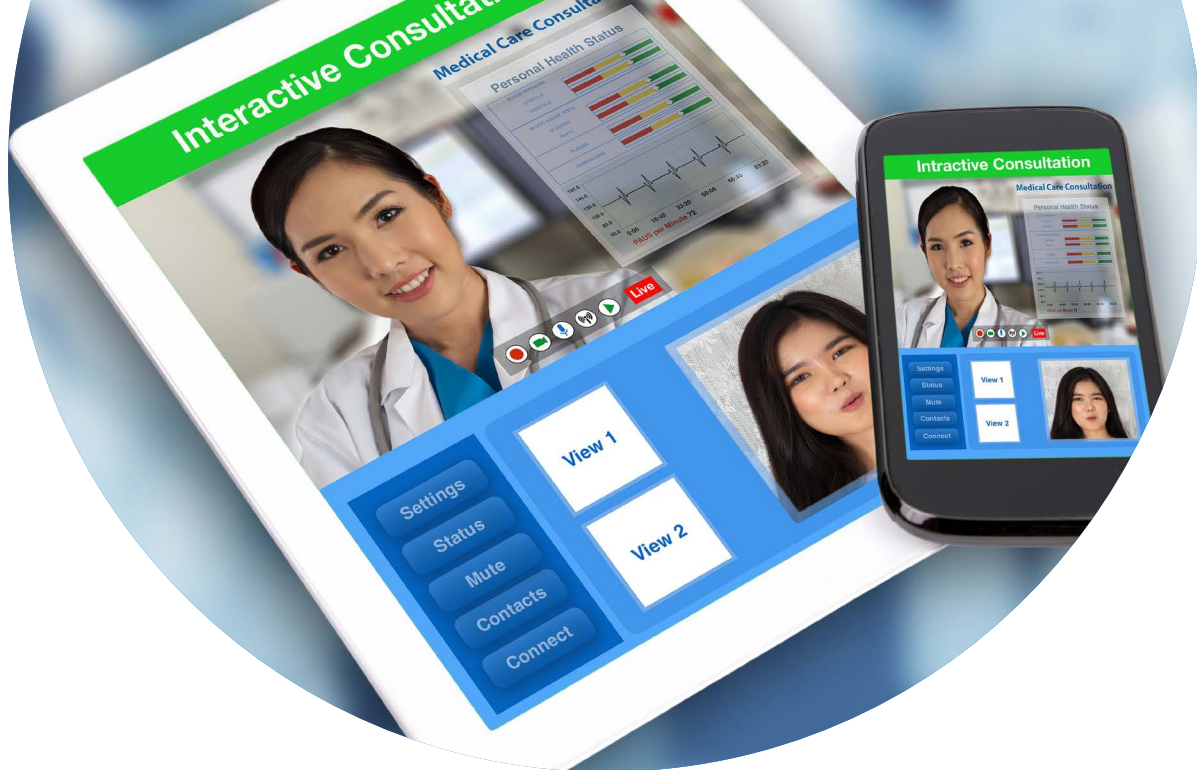
how does **payment** and insurance **reimbursement** work for RPM?

As of 2019, there are a number of new CPT codes in place that allow for reimbursement for Remote Patient Monitoring services. These codes are as follows:

- **CPT Code 99453:** “Remote monitoring of physiologic parameter(s) (e.g., weight, blood pressure, pulse oximetry, respiratory flow rate), initial set-up and patient education on use of equipment.” **This code specifically offers reimbursement for work related to onboarding a patient who is new to RPM service, including setting up the equipment and educating the patient on its use.** On average, Medicare will pay \$19.46 for these services.
- **CPT Code 99454:** “Remote monitoring of physiologic parameter(s) (e.g., weight, blood pressure, pulse oximetry, respiratory flow rate), initial device(s) supply with daily recording(s) or programmed alert(s) transmission, every 30 days.” **This code covers all RPM services provided to a patient over a 30-day period and, as such, can only be billed once every 30 days.** Medicare pays out \$64.15 for this code, on average.
- **CPT Code 99457:** “Remote physiologic monitoring treatment management services, 20 minutes or more of clinical staff/physician/ other qualified healthcare professional time in a calendar month requiring interactive communication with the patient/caregiver during the month.” **This code covers time spent by the clinical staff on monitoring or communicating with RPM patients, including email, phone, and text communication.** Medicare pays an average of \$51.54 for this code (non-facility) and \$32.44 (facility).
- **CPT Code 99091:** “Collection and interpretation of physiologic data (e.g., ECG, blood pressure, glucose monitoring) digitally stored and/or transmitted by the patient and/or caregiver to the physician or other qualified healthcare professional, qualified by education, training, licensure/regulation (when applicable) requiring a minimum of 30 minutes of time, every 30 days.” **This code, which existed before the previous three were enacted in 2019, reimburses professionals for time spent monitoring patients without the need for interactive communication, unlike 99457.** An important difference to note, however, is that 99091 requires that a physician or another qualified health professional performs the monitoring services and that they do so for a minimum of 30 minutes every 30 days in order to bill. On average, Medicare pays \$58.38 for services under 99091, and it’s also important to note that 99091 and 99457 cannot be billed concurrently.

As you can see, there is revenue to be made through RPM, making this service important to not only patient health, but also a practice’s financial health as well. The use of RPM is truly a win/win as patients experience better health outcomes with more thorough and consistent monitoring and practices can bring in additional revenue, without putting a strain on their schedule and staff.





RPM and Medpod

Medpod is a leader in digital healthcare, serving on the front lines of meeting healthcare challenges head-on. One way that Medpod is working to deliver innovative solutions is through its standalone monitoring network, ideal for remote patient monitoring. Medpod can be used to deliver chronic care anytime, anywhere. With disease state kits designed to monitor a number of specific chronic illnesses, **Medpod allows providers to improve patient outcomes, earn additional revenue, and fulfill the regulations of value-based care through its fully integrated platform for RPM.** The steps for using Medpod for RPM are simple. First, a provider prescribes the appropriate kit to their patient, based on the chronic illnesses present. Next, that provider develops a specific care plan, of which Medpod is an integral part. Then the patient is monitored using the tools in the Medpod disease kit, taking an average of 20 to 60 minutes of staff time per month. When alerts occur, notifications are sent to the

provider, allowing them the opportunity to intervene. Patients **experience improved health outcomes** and providers receive the incremental reimbursements by way of the CPT codes enacted in 2019.

Using Medpod's standalone monitoring network for RPM has a number of benefits. Overall care costs are reduced by 34.5% when Medpod is used for RPM. This is achieved thanks to a **49.5% reduction in hospitalizations and a 50% reduction on days spent in the hospital**, along with other savings in the form of less necessary professional services and outpatient costs. **Additional benefits include a 25% improvement in patient satisfaction, a 75% reduction in the 30-day readmission rate, and a 13% improvement in medication compliance.** These benefits demonstrate the value that is achieved through the use of Medpod RPM.

Medpod and Uber Assist Partnership



In addition to its standalone network for remote patient monitoring, Medpod has partnered with Uber Assist to take telehealth to the next level by sending a telepresenter directly to a patient's home for in-home virtual visits. **This partnership between Medpod, Uber Health, and Henry Schein brings together the leading tediagnostic capabilities network with the leading mobility as a service network orchestrator and the leading distributor to the non-acute physician market to provide a state-of-the-art service that can revolutionize access to care.**



uber**ASSIST**

The steps for this partnership, **which is slowly being rolled out first to select cities with a more widespread rollout planned over time, is for the patient to order a virtual visit, at which point they are paired with a driver and telepresenter.** They will then pay their co-payment and the telepresenter will be brought, via Uber Health, to the patient's home for the purpose of providing remote care. This service will be useful for pre-scheduled visits, episodic or urgent care, as well as lab collection and testing, fulfilling a need in a number of areas.



other areas where RPM can be of use

There are a few other areas where the use of remote patient monitoring can enhance the patient experience. **The first of these is home healthcare.** Since at least 1997 it's been believed that RPM and telehealth are complementary to home healthcare, and in 2006, a study found that virtual visits between chronically ill patients and skilled home healthcare nurses can improve patient outcomes while lowering costs as compared to in-person home healthcare visits. With this in mind, it makes sense that remote patient monitoring is able to improve home healthcare. RPM can empower professionals in the home healthcare space to optimize the time they spend with patients by making visits more convenient. Where home healthcare professionals would previously have to visit patients in person to understand their condition, **with the use of RPM, patients can be consistently monitored allowing for less frequent and more efficient visits.**

Another area that can benefit from the use of RPM is visiting nurses. Similar to the benefits of home healthcare with regard to RPM, because of more consistent monitoring, visiting nurses can have a more thorough understanding of a patient's condition without having to physically visit them. **This allows the patients to feel more independent and can enhance their quality of life,** as the monitoring that would have typically involved an in-person visit from a nurse is done seamlessly within the patient's day-to-day life, allowing for less disruption.

Finally, **RPM can be a major problem solver for ambulatory surgery centers.** It's estimated that upwards of 8% of pre-booked surgeries never actually get filled because patients fail to make it to the doctor for their pre-surgery workup. The vast majority of the tests that are necessary prior to surgery can be performed through remote patient monitoring. **By eliminating the disruption of an actual doctor's visit for a surgical pre-check, more patients can retain their scheduled surgeries and receive the care they need.** This reduces the amount of empty ORs and the lost revenue that goes along with it.



conclusion

Today's technology provides **many opportunities for providers** to offer outstanding care to their patients in creative ways. Remote patient monitoring (RPM) is one of those ways, and one that is garnering increased attention with the new CPT codes issued last year that allow for expanded RPM reimbursement. **As with any relatively new program, RPM can sound intimidating to practices just starting out, but it doesn't have to be difficult, particularly when practices find the right partner to facilitate their program.** Medpod, offered through Henry Schein Solutions Hub, is an outstanding partner, offering a standalone network for **RPM as well as its partnership with Uber Assist to bring telepresenters to patients' homes, taking virtual visits to the next level.** Are you ready to get started with RPM? Let Solutions Hub help you get started. Visit henryscheinsolutionshub.com or call **833-433-2482** to learn more about Medpod.

