



# AMERICAN MOBILE & TELEDENTISTRY ALLIANCE

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*Founded in 2019, the American Mobile & Teledentistry Alliance (AMTA) is designated a 501(c)4 nonprofit organization. AMTA is the only professional association focused on the future of Alternative Care Delivery Models and designed to support the dental professionals, dental practices and brands around the world who are utilizing mobile delivery and virtual care. To learn more, visit [www.amda.net](http://www.amda.net).*

## *Considerations on the Importance of Asynchronous Teledentistry*

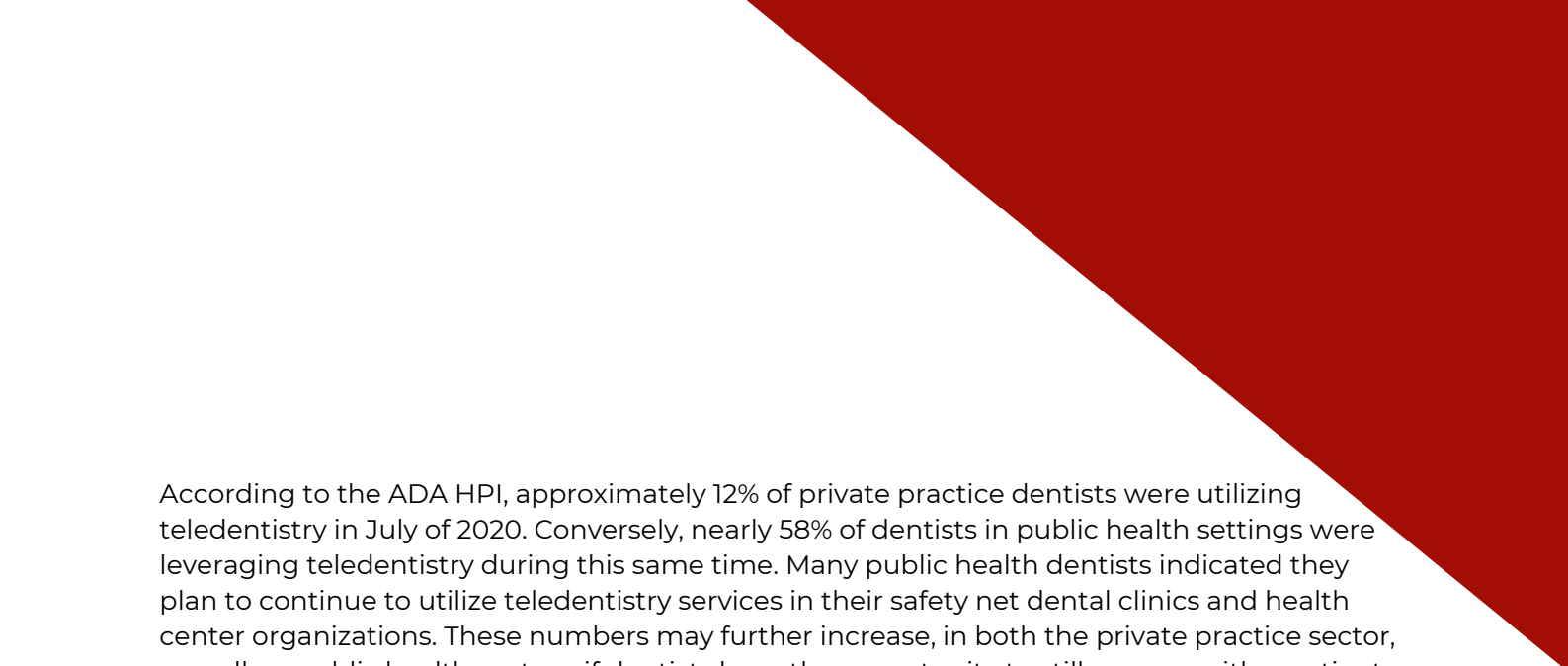
*The American Mobile & Teledentistry Alliance (AMTA) advocates for the increased use of mobile delivery of dental care, telehealth in dentistry and other nontraditional Alternative Care Delivery Models to significantly and quickly expand access to quality dental care and oral health education to all communities.*

The American Mobile & Teledentistry Alliance (AMTA) supports the use of synchronous as well as asynchronous dental services. Telehealth services can aid in virtual triage and virtual management of conditions until definitive care can be delivered. Telehealth can also aid in the remote delivery of preventive services, such as by a hygienist or nurse. The following details highlight the support needed for successful asynchronous teledentistry appointments.

AMTA highlights that virtual services should be consistent with in-person services. It is understood that a procedure that cannot be provided in person should not be provided with teledentistry. However, teledentistry is a change in communication and modality of service, not the service itself. To ensure optimal teledentistry encounters, technology and connectivity are paramount. If a patient or a provider lacks access to quality technology and/or broadband, a synchronous encounter will be compromised and provide less than what could be provided during an in-person visit. For instance, if the stream lags or freezes or the image quality is poor, the dentist is unable to make an informed treatment recommendation for that patient. However, if an asynchronous encounter is utilized, this will allow the on-site provider or patient to take the necessary time in obtaining clear, quality images and clinical information. This information can be clearly organized and sent to the dentist for review. The dentist then has an opportunity for live follow-up, either as a synchronous face-to-face encounter or a simple telephone call, to inform the patient of treatment recommendations.

Additionally, the utilization of an asynchronous encounter can help increase access to a dentist by a patient who faces barriers such as transportation, inability to take time off work, or lack of childcare, among others. An asynchronous encounter allows the patient to contact the dentist at a time that is convenient to the patient and receive follow-up information in a secured method. The opportunity of an asynchronous encounter allows for patients to still access dental care during regular business hours. For instance, a dental hygienist is able to visit a long term care facility and gather a complete dental record during regular business hours. A supervising dentist can review the record at a later time and make appropriate treatment recommendations, one of which may include the need for an in-person exam before further treatment is recommended.

A dentist who maintains an in-person practice may not be available for a synchronous teledentistry encounter during the day. It is not a cost-effective use of the dentist's time to be sitting at a computer during the clinic day awaiting a synchronous examination. De-valuing asynchronous dentistry may further discourage private dentists from participating in these services.



According to the ADA HPI, approximately 12% of private practice dentists were utilizing teledentistry in July of 2020. Conversely, nearly 58% of dentists in public health settings were leveraging teledentistry during this same time. Many public health dentists indicated they plan to continue to utilize teledentistry services in their safety net dental clinics and health center organizations. These numbers may further increase, in both the private practice sector, as well as, public health sectors, if dentists have the opportunity to still engage with a patient through an asynchronous encounter. For instance, a private dentist may be able to complete an asynchronous encounter between in-person care at a brick and mortar office or have time set aside at the end of the day to complete asynchronous encounters. These encounters can help direct patients to more definitive treatment options, allow for triaging of emergencies, as well as, potentially remove the middle-man of an in-person exam before a referral to the necessary specialist. Asynchronous dental encounters not only increase access to a dentist, but can also increase data collection for comprehensive electronic dental records and improve efficiency of the workflow.

In an effort to ensure quality teledentistry care is provided through both synchronous and asynchronous encounters, development of specific regulations and/or a certificate program should be considered. A certificate program can provide definitive guidance to what is required for a complete asynchronous or synchronous dental encounter. As with all CDT codes utilized, there is a specific description of the service that is rendered for that code. Understanding the specifics of the D9995 and D9994 code can help guide appropriate usage of these codes. Additionally, for dentists and/or hygienists who are interested in providing care via teledentistry, a certificate or training program can provide added value, understanding, and authority to this treatment modality. This can help providers communicate with patients the differences between an in-person exam and a virtual dental exam, as well as, the differences between a synchronous virtual exam and an asynchronous virtual exam. Helping our patients make informed decisions and consent appropriately will help improve successful outcomes for all teledentistry based encounters.

Telehealth services, including teledentistry, will continue to play an increasingly important role in our healthcare systems. Teledentistry allows for the opportunity for increased convenience and improved communication across all aspects of a patient's care. The opportunity for asynchronous encounters further increases the ability to connect with a dentist, both during regular business hours, as well as after hours. This can increase access to preventive services, virtual management and triage of dental emergencies. As each patient's needs will be unique through varied settings, allowing the opportunity for both synchronous and asynchronous care delivery is important for best possible care outcomes.

Statement released August 2022. Learn more at [www.amda.net](http://www.amda.net).