

WAC 296-23-359 When is telemedicine appropriate for an independent medical exam (IME)? (1) The following exams may be conducted via telehealth:

- (a) Mental health;
- (b) Dermatology;
- (c) Speech when there is no documented hearing loss;
- (d) Kidney function;
- (e) Hematopoietic system;
- (f) Endocrine.

(2) The terms telehealth and telemedicine are used interchangeably and have the same requirements as in-person visits. Telemedicine may be appropriate to effectively conduct an independent medical exam when:

(a) Face-to-face services by a qualified medical provider can be delivered through a real-time, two-way, audio video connection, and complies with all federal, state, and local rules and laws; and

(b) A worker is able and willing to participate in an exam via telemedicine; and

(c) The department or self-insured employer, and worker, have agreed a telemedicine IME is appropriate; these individuals should also agree to the location of the worker during the exam; and

(d) The agreement is documented in the claim file; and

(e) A physical or hands-on exam is not required.

(3) Upon request of the department or self-insured employer and with the agreement of the worker, a telemedicine IME may be approved on a case-by-case basis for additional specialties not listed under subsection (1) of this section.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 51.04.020, 51.04.030, 51.36.070, 51.32.055, 51.32.110, 51.32.112, 51.32.114, and 51.32.072. WSR 23-16-115, § 296-23-359, filed 8/1/23, effective 9/1/23.]