

# Prescription Digital Therapeutics: Fact Sheet

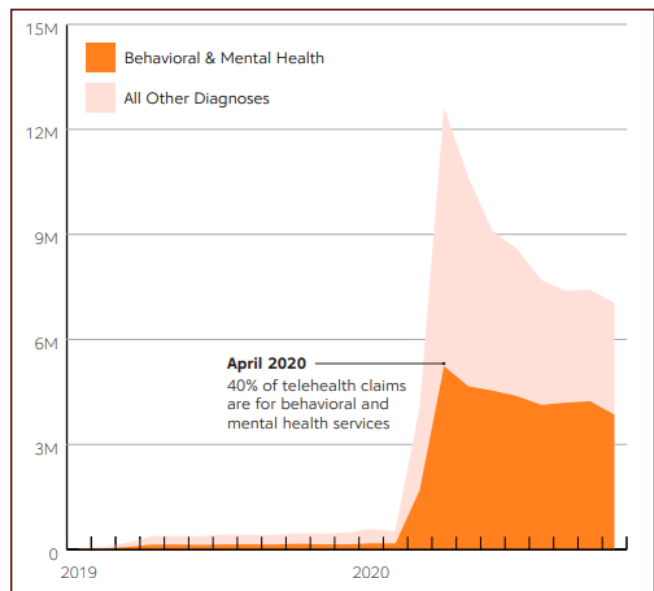
## Efforts needed to ensure patient access and reimbursement to remotely manage their behavioral health and substance use disorders

Prescription digital therapeutics (PDTs) are a new category of evidence-based medical interventions that use software accessed on a tablet or smartphone to prevent, manage, or treat a range of diseases and disorders.<sup>1</sup>

PDTs are particularly important to provide patients adjunctive, alternative options to treat their behavioral health and substance use disorders, given current COVID-19 pandemic restrictions and less willingness for some patients to travel to a healthcare facility or hospital for care. (Typical interventions include several in-person clinician visits to receive cognitive therapy and additional hospital visits).

The benefits of PDTs include:

- **Enabling patients to augment, expand, and improve currently available treatment options** for their behavioral health and substance use disorders by offering easy access to cognitive therapy to address and interrupt complex behavioral patterns (in addition to a number of in-person office visits)
- **Increased patient engagement**, given they can access their PDT software at any time of day or night
- **Enhanced privacy** for those patients that may feel some stigma for seeking treatment for their behavioral health or substance use disorder



- **Clinicians can provide support to their patients and monitor each patient's progress virtually**

During the COVID-19 pandemic, behavioral and mental health disorders were the leading diagnosis for telehealth claims;<sup>2</sup> **coverage for PDTs would give providers another adjunctive tool in their toolbox to help patients easily access behavioral therapy interventions from their personal digital devices.**

Despite the promise of PDTs to bend the curve on patient care and outcomes, there are a number of complementary efforts needed to ensure widespread access to PDTs:

- **Efforts by national and state-based PDT coalitions and advocacy groups to educate patients, clinicians, the media, and government and private payers** about PDTs and the promise and value they can bring to address a number of diseases and conditions
- **Development and introduction of state and federal legislation** to create reimbursement pathways for PDTs, especially here in California through Medi-CAL, which serves people who potentially stand to gain the most from these adjunctive therapies.
- **Mobilization of policymakers and legislative champions** to advocate for access to PDTs and the need to create reimbursement pathway to enable patient access (through stories in the media, op eds, social media interactions, and public speaking)
- **Public recognition of key legislative champions** for their leadership in advocating for patient access to digital therapeutics

---

<sup>1</sup> Digital Therapeutics Alliance, [Understanding DTx](#), accessed 10/12/21

<sup>2</sup> Cover My Meds, [2021 Medication Access Report – Legislative and Regulatory Edition](#), accessed 10/12/21