

# Workflow for Using Telemedicine in Workers' Compensation

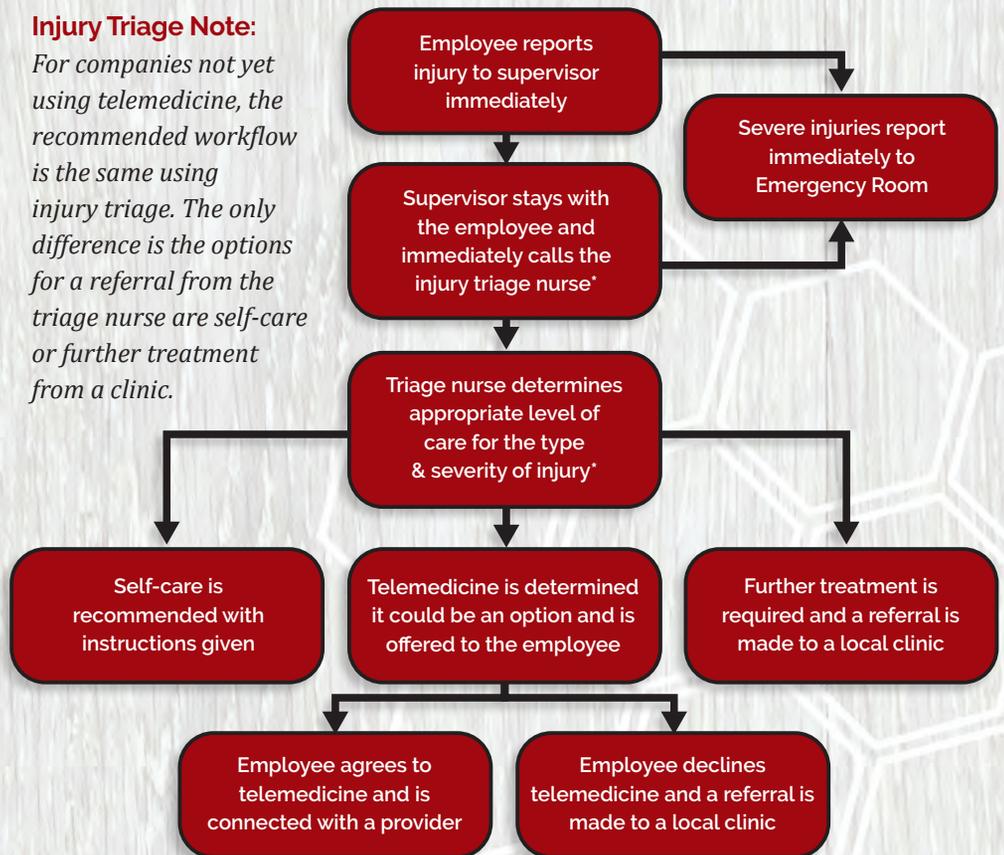


## Sample Post-Injury Response Using Telemedicine

Telemedicine in workers' compensation has a limited scope of use. However, it can be very effective for the right employees with the right types of injuries. The key to successful use of this service is filtering and qualifying each employee and injury immediately following an accident through the use of injury triage.

### Injury Triage Note:

*For companies not yet using telemedicine, the recommended workflow is the same using injury triage. The only difference is the options for a referral from the triage nurse are self-care or further treatment from a clinic.*



Telemedicine is an emerging technology in the workers' compensation industry. While telemedicine in group health has experienced exponential growth, workers' comp stakeholders have been slow to adopt this model.

**Use telemedicine for initial or one-off care:** The role of telemedicine is for initial or one-off, semi-urgent care rather than ongoing treatment.

**Jacob Lazarovic, MD:** *You want the telemedicine care to be used on a one-off basis, for something that comes up initially or suddenly and especially if it's after hours or on weekends, etc., when the worker may not be able to reach the regular physician.*



Jacob Lazarovic, MD  
Medical Advisor to Amaxx

*Generally, the telemedicine physician can prescribe medications, depending on regulations in various states.*

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## Cheesecake Factory Example:

At the 2019 Workers' Comp Research Institute (WCRI) annual conference, Kurt Leisure, VP of Risk Services for the Cheesecake Factory offered insight into their use of the above workflow.

- 3,000 injury triage calls initiated over 1 year
- 33% or approximately 1,000 were determined appropriate for self-care
- 51% or approximately 1,530 were referred for further treatment at a local clinic
- 16% or 470 calls were determined appropriate for telemedicine
  - 70% or 330 employee accepted the telemedicine treatment option
  - 50% or 165 of those treated with telemedicine were resolved without further treatment

**Kurt Leisure stated the company had saved \$153,000 using telemedicine.**

## Benefits of Telemedicine:

Telemedicine offers many benefits when used for the appropriate injuries at the appropriate time including:

- Immediate care
- No transportation costs
- Predictable cost
- Notes from the call can transfer directly into the claims system
- Immediate return to work is possible as the employee never leaves the employer site
- Non-English speaking providers are available for non-English speaking employees
- Fewer missed appointments
- Less time off work for employees

## Challenges & Considerations of Telemedicine:

- Adoption of the service has been very slow
- Regulatory challenges exist
  - Determining fee schedules
  - Setting treatment guidelines
  - Appropriate reimbursements
  - Reporting requirements
  - Defining the scope of care
- Can double pay if a referral is made to telemedicine and then made to a local clinic for additional treatment
  - Leverage injury triage for better qualifying and filtering
- Some employees are resistant to the model

**Use telemedicine for initial or one-off care:**

*The role of telemedicine is for initial or one-off, semi-urgent care rather than ongoing treatment.*



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