



The Hospital + Healthsystem
Association of Pennsylvania

Leading for Better Health

June 14, 2023

The Honorable John DiSanto
Chairman
Banking & Insurance Committee
Pennsylvania Senate
168 Main Capitol
Harrisburg, PA 17120

The Honorable Sharif Street
Democratic Chairman
Banking & Insurance Committee
Pennsylvania Senate
535 Main Capitol
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Chairman DiSanto and Chairman Street:

On behalf of 235 hospital and health system members statewide—as well as the patients and communities they serve—The Hospital and Healthsystem Association of Pennsylvania (HAP) writes today to express its support for Senate Bill 739, introduced by Senator Elder Vogel, to provide clarity for insurance payments related to health care services delivered via telehealth.

Pennsylvania is one of only ten states that has not already legislated coverage or mandated payment parity for telemedicine services. As you know, during 2021 the Senate passed a telehealth bill with near unanimity. It is long past time to act.

We ask that you bring this bill before your committee as soon as possible and urge members to vote yes.

Pennsylvania's hospitals are committed to providing the right treatment, in the right place, at the right time. For thousands of Pennsylvanians, this means being able to choose high-quality primary, specialty, and follow-up care via telemedicine.

Innovation, quality, and demand for telemedicine grew exponentially during the pandemic. The value of care delivered by this modality was unquestionable. As we come out of the public health emergency, the nation is facing another kind of crisis: a health care workforce shortage. Telehealth services extend the reach of our existing providers and connect them with patients in rural and other underserved communities, which continually struggle to provide specialty care; as well as in urban and suburban areas, which consistently strive to balance countless patients across an exceptionally limited number of providers.

Pennsylvania's hospitals support SB 739 to expand access to health care across the commonwealth. Specifically, the legislation will:

- Assure that insurers cannot deny payment for care simply because it is delivered via telemedicine
- Ensure greater access to primary and specialty care, particularly for those who are isolated, older, or without transportation



Leading for Better Health

Chairman DiSanto and Chairman Street

June 14, 2023

Page 2

- Help patients manage chronic conditions and avoid hospital admissions or readmissions
- Support schools to address physical and behavioral health issues
- Aid caregivers of elderly or seriously ill patients
- Align with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services' position that more must be done to expand payment for telemedicine services

Thank you for your time and consideration. We urge you to bring SB 739 before the Senate Banking & Insurance Committee and to vote yes.

Thank you for your work to improve health care for all Pennsylvanians. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please contact Heather Tyler, vice president, state legislative advocacy, at HTyler@HAPonline.org or (717) 433-1997. We stand ready to assist in this vital work.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andy Carter', is written in a cursive style.

Andy Carter
President and Chief Executive Officer

cc: Senator Vogel