



The Hospital + Healthsystem
Association of Pennsylvania

Leading for Better Health

May 24, 2021

TO: Members of the Senate Health and Human Services Committee

FROM: The Hospital and Healthsystem Association of Pennsylvania

SUBJECT: Support Retaining Health Care Innovations Act—Senate Bill 671

The Hospital and Healthsystem Association of Pennsylvania (HAP), on behalf of its members—more than 240 acute and specialty hospitals and health systems—requests your support of Senate Bill 671, sponsored by Senator Scott Hutchinson (R-Venango).

Senate Bill 671 ensures that, once the COVID-19 emergency declaration is over, there will be a gradual and responsible return to health care practices for both the provider and the patient by extending waivers and administrative flexibilities for a time period beyond the end of the emergency declaration. The bill also directs the Joint State Government Commission, with the guidance of a health care advisory board, to study and provide recommendations on which waivers should remain in place permanently.

As mitigation efforts subside and communities resume life as “normal”, COVID-19 remains a threat and failing to maintain the current waivers and flexibilities will make it more difficult for the health care community to respond effectively and efficiently.

State-level waivers and flexibilities have provided the necessary tools for the health care community to respond to COVID-19. Without knowing when and under what circumstances the emergency declaration will end, the health care community is supporting Senate Bill 671 for **patient assurance and provider predictability as health care transitions beyond the emergency declaration.**

Some examples of the flexibilities allowed under the emergency declaration include:

- **Telehealth advancements**—allowing for telephonic visits, paying for the service at the same rate that would be paid for a similar in-person visit, and continuing to allow for non-traditional telehealth platforms
- **Facility licensure**—allowing hospitals the ability to streamline the process to provide services in other health care facilities and sites that would not otherwise be considered part of a health care facility
- **Workforce supports**—expanding provider licensing to increase patient access to care, allowing supervisory requirements without changing scope to be flexible so that hospitals can shift practitioners within a facility to meet patient needs, and permitting the provision of services through telehealth

Please be assured that the goal of this legislation is not to circumvent the appropriate channels for having the scope of practice discussions.

Thank you in advance for your support.