

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH
PUBLIC ACT SUMMARY



PA 12-109—sHB 5483

Human Services Committee

**AN ACT CONCERNING COVERAGE OF TELEMEDICINE SERVICES
UNDER MEDICAID**

SUMMARY: This act allows the DSS commissioner to establish a demonstration project at federally qualified health centers (FQHC—see BACKGROUND) under which clinically appropriate Medicaid-eligible services are provided by telemedicine. “Telemedicine” uses interactive audio, video, or data technology—other than fax or audio-only telephone contact—to deliver advice, care, diagnosis, treatment, or similar services to patients in place of in-person contact. The act only permits services to be provided by these technologies. Its requirement that telemedicine be used when “clinically appropriate” means that it be (1) provided in a timely manner that meets professionally recognized standards of acceptable medical care, (2) delivered in the appropriate medical setting, and (3) less expensive than equally effective alternative treatments or diagnostic services.

The act also:

1. authorizes the DSS commissioner to follow existing procedures, including amending the state Medicaid plan if necessary, to ensure that services delivered via telemedicine are covered;
2. allows him to set reimbursement rates for telemedicine service providers that take into consideration reduced travel times and other relevant factors;
3. subjects transmission, storage, and dissemination of personally-identifying telemedicine data and records to federal and state laws that safeguard privacy, security, and confidentiality; and
4. by an unspecified date, requires the commissioner to report to the Appropriations and Human Services committees on the services offered and project’s cost-effectiveness.

EFFECTIVE DATE: January 1, 2013

BACKGROUND

FQHCs

FQHCs are health centers that provide primary care services in underserved urban and rural communities. Their primary purpose is to expand access for uninsured and underserved populations who experience financial, geographic, or cultural barriers to care and (1) live in or near federally-designated health professional shortage areas or (2) are designated as a medically underserved population.

OLR Tracking: SP:KM:PFro:eh