



**Written Testimony of Kristin Smith, RN, MSN, CCP
Telehealth Coordinator at VNA Community Healthcare**

**Before the Human Services Committee,
February 10, 2015**

**Raised Bill HB 6149
Testimony in Support of:**

HB 6149 an Act Concerning Medicaid Coverage of Telemonitoring Services

Good afternoon Senator Moore, Rep. Abercrombie, and Human Services Committee members.

My name is Kristin Smith and I have been a cardiac nurse for 26 years and practicing in Connecticut for the past 17 years. For the past 8 years I have been the coordinator for VNA Community Healthcare's telehealth program.

Many patients are managing multiple chronic conditions, most have more than one. These patients have many challenges and have increased difficulty in managing the complexity of their health. Some of the barriers include multiple medications, multiple physicians and exacerbation of one condition which has an effect on another. One way to closely monitor these patients and promote self-management of their illness is through telemonitoring.

A telemonitor is a device that is placed in a patient's home. This device prompts them on a daily basis to record and measure weights, blood pressure, heart rate and oxygen levels. Patients answer disease specific questions on a touch screen pad. This information is then sent securely to the VNA where specialized nurses analyze and assess the data. Any data that is out of parameters is flagged and follow up will occur. The data is interfaced with the patient's EMR providing case managers real time and quick access to the patient's data.

Telemonitoring is a quick and easy way to keep a close eye on patients with chronic illness and prevent unnecessary use of health care resources including hospitalization. That means early warning signs can be caught sooner and intervention can occur before a patient goes to an emergency room.

Telemonitoring also provides information to the patients' physician that is important for on-going care. Multiple physician offices can access a web version of the telemonitor data to more closely monitor their patients. Also, patients may bring trend data to the MD office visit which allows for more in-depth analysis.

B E S I D E Y O U A T E V E R Y T U R N

Written Testimony of Kristin Smith, RN, MSN, CCP (continued)

Patients' goals are frequently to remain home without hospitalizations and telemonitoring allows patients to do just that, manage their chronic conditions at home. They are able to see the cause and effects of their actions and make better choices which promote self-management, an important for long term goal.

In summary, telemonitoring is an effective and efficient tool in health care delivery. The problem lies in the fact there is no reimbursement for this valuable service. Home health agencies such as ours can not continue to provide this service without financial support. I strongly recommend telemonitoring be a covered service under Medicaid.