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**February 10, 2015**

**IN SUPPORT OF House Bill HB-6419-6149  
AN ACT CONCERNING MEDICAID COVERAGE OF TELEMONITORING SERVICES**



Visiting Nurse Services of Connecticut, Inc. is one of the state's oldest and largest, nonprofit, home healthcare providers. The agency serves 9,000 residents of Fairfield, New Haven, and Litchfield counties with over 255,000 home visits, including 2,000 patients under Medicaid health insurance coverage.

Visiting Nurse Services has offered a Telehealth monitoring program for more than 10 years. Striving for the maintenance and promotion of community health ensures that Agency staff work with patients to ensure adaptation of the most effective techniques to manage chronic illnesses.

Chronic illnesses are the primary health issue confronting those receiving healthcare assistance at home. This is especially true for the Medicaid population. Chronic illness management is best accomplished by maintaining necessary life-long lifestyle changes and monitoring symptoms. Telehealth monitoring devices assist patients in achieving these changes and help in daily monitoring weight, blood pressure, blood glucose level, oxygenation, and pulse rate. Monitoring devices help to promote active patient engagement and education about the effects of poor health behaviors.

At a cost per patient of approximately \$400 per month, telehealth devices provide clinicians the opportunity to intervene before symptoms escalate, potentially resulting in expensive hospitalizations. Patient outcomes demonstrate that telemonitoring helps to reduce health care expenditures.

The home based monitors utilized in telehealth, unfortunately, are not Medicaid reimbursable. This lack of reimbursement specific to telehealth coupled with the low reimbursement rates for Medicaid home health visits have caused us to make the difficult decision to no longer provide telehealth services to our Medicaid population. Patients are and will continue to lose out on the benefits of this tool, leading to even greater health disparities in treatments and outcomes. Our reality is that the agency has a responsibility to keep our expenses in reasonable range in order

*Patient Care Service Offices:* Bridgeport, Oxford, Torrington, Trumbull  
*Ancillary Offices:* Litchfield, Norwalk, Southbury