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Good afternoon, Senator Crisco, Representative Megna, and members of the Insurance and Real Estate Committee. Thank you, Senator Crisco for all of his advocacy on this important issue. I am Mark Masselli, President and CEO of Community Health Center, Inc. and I am testifying today in support of Senate Bill 5, An Act Concerning Health Insurance Coverage for Telemedicine Services.

For over forty years, CHC has provided top quality integrated care. We are a unique state wide non-profit primary health care organization with a mission to serve the underinsured and special populations. Because we are spread throughout the State, with over 250 locations, we have been an early adopter of telemedicine. All of our sites use a single consolidated electronic health record system and everyone has robust videoconferencing access. As an early adopter, we are now going into our 9th year with fully integrated health records.

We've developed models that rely on this capability which we would like to explore further. Telemedicine is moving the delivery model creatively in many states and I worry that Connecticut is lagging because of the limitations currently placed on providers.

Today, our state has shortages of various providers in many of its communities. The use of telemedicine would be a great help in addressing this problem. In particular I want to focus on one of those areas, the lack of child psychiatrists. Too often, there are children at either a fixed site or in a school where an intervention by a child psychiatrist, if one were available, would be very useful, in fact sometimes critically important. Unfortunately, Medicaid as well as many other payors don't reimburse for telemedicine services. This needs to change. While we would all like to have our provider in the same room with us the facts are evident that this is not available to many people.

Another area where telemedicine can make an important impact is in cardiology. We are about to launch an exciting initiative throughout New England, an econsult network that was first researched at our Health Center in collaboration with UCONN and DSS. This effort is being supported by the Cox Foundation from Boston. Simply put, in econsults we send the patient data to the specialist instead of initially sending the patient. Our research looked at a group of our providers who sent their patients directly to the specialist and those that used the electronic consult. We brought in an economist and did a three year review of their cost. Econsults resulted in a savings of over \$600 annually. It also resulted in patient outcomes that were similar to, or better than, health outcomes for the control group. This is the type of adaptive research that needs to take place to make sure that telemedicine improves outcomes, reduces cost, and increases access.

Passing Senate Bill 5, An Act Concerning Health Insurance Coverage for Telemedicine Services, will make it possible to increase research and positive results in this area. We encourage you to adopt the bill.



Serving underserved and uninsured patients at Connecticut's largest network of community health centers.