



Testimony of Brian T. Lynch, O.D.  
February 23, 2015  
SB 246, SB 467 and HB6487

Acts concerning the establishing of standards for and the facilitation of Telemedicine.

My name is Dr. Brian T. Lynch and I am a practicing Optometrist in Branford, CT and also Legislation Chairman for The Connecticut Association of Optometrists

I thank you for giving me the opportunity to share some thoughts on these three proposed bills,

The legislature, with the passage of Public Act 12-1 in the December 2012 special session, created a process for the development of a demonstration telemedicine program for Medicaid. However, it appears that the department is not yet ready to launch it and is still developing design options.

That law, C.G.S. 17b-245c, contains a number of components that would be worthy of inclusion in a new law establishing the standards for telemedicine.

- C.G.S. 17b-245c defined Telemedicine. That definition required that medical services such as diagnosis and advice be done with the use of interactive audio and video and not audio-only, telephone or facsimile. We agree that standards for telemedicine should be limited to interactive real time audio-video interactions and we urge the use of that definition in the drafting of your bill.
- The bill should require that the transmission, storage and dissemination of data and records when using Telemedicine should be in compliance with the existing federal and state laws regarding the privacy and confidentiality of patient's records. C.G.S. 17b-245c contained such protections and we suggest that this bill include similar protections.
- The bill should require that providers using telemedicine technology have a valid Connecticut state license. While the benefits of Telemedicine are self-evident, maintaining the quality of care must always be our prime concern.
- Connecticut's existing policy prohibiting interference with the patients' choice of physicians or optometrists (see C.G.S. 20-138b) should be reflected in the provisions of the bill.
- We believe that the relationship between a patient and a health care provider needs to be established prior to any medical care being given by the use of Telemedicine. The bill should reflect that safeguard.

Finally, we believe that telemedicine guidelines for the each of the differing professions within the healing arts community need to be developed and approved by their respective State Boards or Commissions.

In summary, there are obvious benefits to Telemedicine: better access by patients to health care and lowers costs. Its use could significantly improve the quality of care. But its use will require some major changes in how health care providers deliver services and are paid for those services.

The Connecticut Association of Optometrist on behalf of our patients and members, look forward to participating in the process to develop the standards for telemedicine.