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Good morning, Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter, and members of the Public Health Committee. I am Mark Masselli, President and CEO of Community Health Center, Inc. and I am testifying today in support of efforts to define, facilitate and establish standards for telemedicine in Connecticut.

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, too many patients in our state lack proper access to specialty care. The use of telemedicine would be a great help in addressing this problem.

CHC conducted a randomized trial on Medicaid patients in cardiology. Our research in collaboration with UCONN and DSS 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. These results led to CHC being awarded a grant by the Cox Foundation from Boston to build an eConsults network in New England covering five specialty areas,

Simply put, in eConsults we send the patient data to the specialist instead of initially sending the patient. This is the type of adaptive research that needs to take place to make sure that telemedicine improves outcomes, reduces cost, and increases access.

Another specialty too many patients lack access to is 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. As we seek to remove barriers to health care through the appropriate use of technology, we need to be careful not to introduce new barriers by limiting telemedicine to just one group of health care providers, such as physicians.

Passing bills to define, facilitate and establish standards for telemedicine in Connecticut, will make it possible to increase research and positive results in this area. We encourage you to adopt these bills.



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