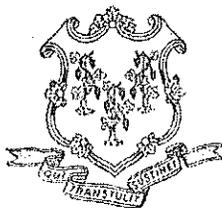


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Finally, I would like to say a few words on telemedicine. I would like to offer my support of SB 298 "An Act Concerning Telehealth Services for Medicaid Recipients." Last year the legislature passed and the governor signed Public Act 15-88, which required private and group health insurers to cover healthcare services provided by telehealth providers. The law was written to assure that the providers' standards of practice and care are upheld; safeguarding that quality is never compromised during a telehealth encounter.

Telehealth is not a substitute for in-person care; but rather a support to it. That is why I am opposed to SB 291, which would weaken the standards of practice by eliminating the requirement that healthcare providers have access to the patient's medical record and medical history. Allowing one or the other would weaken this strong provision.

This year, with the passage of SB 298, we would make quality, affordable healthcare more accessible to the Medicaid population. These are people who often have difficulty accessing the healthcare system. Telehealth would provide more access and I encourage your support.

Thank you for hearing all of this important legislation.