
OLR Bill Analysis

sSB 302

AN ACT CONCERNING TELEHEALTH SERVICES.

SUMMARY

This bill allows telehealth providers to prescribe a Schedule I, II, or III controlled substance using telehealth for treatment of a psychiatric disorder, including medication-assisted treatment (i.e., the use of federal Food and Drug Administration-approved medication in combination with counseling and behavioral therapies). Providers may do this only if it is allowed under their current scope of practice. Current law prohibits telehealth providers from prescribing any Schedule I, II, or III controlled substances using telehealth.

By law, at the first telehealth interaction with a patient, a telehealth provider must document in the patient's medical record that the provider (1) informed the patient about telehealth methods and limitations and (2) obtained the patient's consent to provide telehealth services. Under the bill, if the patient later revokes his or her consent, the telehealth provider must document it in the patient's medical record.

Additionally, current law requires a telehealth provider to ask for the patient's consent to disclose telehealth records to his or her primary care provider. The bill requires the provider to do this only at the initial telehealth interaction, instead of at every such interaction as under current law. If the patient consents, the bill requires the telehealth provider to give the primary care provider records of all telehealth interactions.

Under the bill, consent for providing telehealth services or records disclosure may be obtained from the patient or the patient's legal guardian, conservator, or other authorized representative.

Finally, the bill adds registered nurses and pharmacists to the list of health care providers authorized to provide health care services using telehealth. Under the bill, they must provide telehealth services within their profession's scope of practice and standard of care, just as other telehealth providers must do under existing law.

Existing law already allows the following health care providers to provide health care services using telehealth: physicians, advanced practice registered nurses, physician assistants, occupational and physical therapists, naturopaths, chiropractors, optometrists, podiatrists, psychologists, marital and family therapists, clinical or master social workers, alcohol and drug counselors, professional counselors, dietician-nutritionists, speech and language pathologists, respiratory care practitioners, and audiologists.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2018

COMMITTEE ACTION

Public Health Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 20 Nay 7 (03/23/2018)