

# Human Services Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

**Bill No.:** SB-1052

**Title:** AN ACT EXPANDING MEDICAID COVERAGE OF TELEHEALTH SERVICES.

**Vote Date:** 3/21/2019

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable

**PH Date:** 3/19/2019

**File No.:**

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## **SPONSORS OF BILL:**

Human Services Committee

## **REASONS FOR BILL:**

Senate Bill 1052 would require the Commissioner of the Department of Social Services to expand Medicaid Coverage of telehealth services state wide whenever such coverage meets federal Medicaid requirements for efficiency, economy or quality of care.

## **RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:**

Kathleen Brennan, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Social Services; is in support of this legislation with proposed substitute language. The Department would need to ensure that the expansion of various telehealth services is implemented carefully in order to be done correctly. The Department is considering expanding Medicaid coverage of telehealth services, in the coming months, to increase access to behavioral health services, reduce the need for those who are homebound to travel, and reduce the need for those post-surgery to travel to see providers for related services.

## **NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:**

Kathleen Flaherty, Executive Director, Connecticut Legal Rights Project; in support of this legislation as it will increase access to care and help to avoid some of the issues that occur due to continued issues with the non-emergency medical transportation program, particularly in more rural parts of the state.

Community Health Center Association of Connecticut; Is in support of this legislation. They explain that telehealth services encompass remote patient monitoring, eConsults or online

communication between patients and providers in real time. All of these services enhance access to care and promote patient engagement with their own healthcare.

Sheldon Toubman, New Haven Legal Assistance Association; is in support of this legislation.

Connecticut Hospital Association; is in support of this legislation. Telehealth is a rapidly developing method of delivering direct patient care that is becoming more commonly used both in Connecticut and throughout the country; it is now being used for the full spectrum of care and for more levels of acuity.

Glenn Focht MD, Connecticut Children's Medical Center; is in support of this legislation and commends the service for enhancing access to care in rural areas where there may be provider shortages.

Brunilda Ferraj, Director of Policy Research and Organizational Initiatives, CT Community Nonprofit Alliance; as telehealth is an innovative form of service delivery rather than a new service, it is being seen as a cost-effective alternative to traditional face-to-face methods. In order for it to be best utilized, providers must have the ability to bill to Medicaid for services at a rate that covers the true cost of care.

Tracy Wodatch, Vice President of Clinical and Regulatory Services, Connecticut Association for Healthcare at Home; is in support of this legislation. Telehealth provides value for payers, patients and providers, increases patient access, enhances the reach of healthcare services, reduces cost structure, and provides higher customer satisfaction.

#### **NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

No sources of opposition were submitted on this legislation.

**Reported by: Kayleigh Royston**

**Date: 03/26/2019**