



Quality is Our Bottom Line

Public Health Committee and Insurance and Real Estate Committee

Public Hearing

Monday, March 15, 2021

Connecticut Association of Health Plans

Testimony in Opposition to SB 1022 An Act Concerning Telehealth

Testimony in Support of HB 5596 An Act Concerning Telehealth

First, the Connecticut Association of Health Plans commends the dedication of all front-line and essential workers that answered the call during this challenging time. Regrettably, the Association remains concerned that passage of S.B. 1022, extending the current telehealth law in perpetuity, only exacerbates the affordability concerns relative to increasing insurance premiums. Telehealth has filled a critical void in the medical delivery system this past year but we need to proceed with caution.

It's important to note that commercial carriers were early proponents of coverage for telehealth and telemedicine services. We worked in support of the initial telehealth statutes. Even before COVID, carriers not only reimbursed their own in-network providers for telehealth services, but also afforded members access to telehealth services through specialty companies like Teledoc, MDLive, and Impathy just to name a few.

Throughout the pandemic, carriers went above and beyond what is required under current state statute and executive order voluntarily covering telemedicine visits to ensure patient continuity of care and to accommodate significant practice transformation over a short period of time.

That said, before parity standards are adopted indefinitely, we respectfully request that the state undertake an evaluation and analysis of extending the provisions **in support of H.B. 5596** to:

- Determine the fiscal impact to the state employee plan, partnership plan, Medicaid plan, and Exchange Plans.
- Determine the impact to private plans.
- Determine a cost/benefit analysis.
- Determine the quality of care being delivered, if physical provider locations are closing as a result, and whether certain services should be tied to in-person treatment so that the patient can receive the proper assessment.



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- Determine if increase telehealth is a disincentive to adoption of value-based payment arrangements.
- Determine whether confidentiality standards are being met in accordance with HIPAA. Virtual and telephonic treatments pose a significant risk for cyber-breach and need to be secured accordingly. HIPAA compliant platforms – audio visual, or otherwise - are also integral in ensuring the success of electronic medical records which are vital to patient care management across the entire medical system.

It is with these cautions in mind that we **urge opposition to S.B. 1022.**