

Connecticut Public Health Committee

Re: H.B. No. 5596 (Raised) An act concerning telehealth
S.B. No. 1022 (Raised) An act concerning telehealth

To Whom It May Concern:

As a licensed clinical psychologist, I quickly transitioned my entire practice to telehealth in March of 2020 in an effort to provide my patients, many of who are front line providers and essential workers, the services that they both needed and deserved as they navigated the stressors of these unprecedented times. While telehealth continues to have its quirks including unreliable internet connections, pet and kid cameos, and a pause in services due to the week-long power outages in August, what has become abundantly clear in the last year is how telehealth has dramatically increased access to mental health treatment. One of the silver linings of the pandemic has been increasing access to much-needed services while my patients were juggling innumerable stressors including working from home, a lack of childcare, illness, remote learning, isolation, furloughs and layoffs, and so much loss. While the light begins to glimmer at the end of this long COVID-19 tunnel, I believe that we have so much work ahead of us managing the mental health needs of Connecticut's residents in the coming months and years. Once the trauma of the pandemic begins to recede, we will have a better sense of the impact of this unrelenting stress on our communal psyche. As a community of mental health professionals, we will need all hands on deck. I hope that the legislature recognizes and prioritizes the need to eliminate barriers to mental health treatment and supports the establishment of telehealth as a recognized delivery method for psychological services with equivalent reimbursement rates. H.B. No. 5596 and S.B. No. 1022 will ensure that my patients continue to receive the services that they so desperately need during these challenging times.

Sincerely,
Megan Clarke, Ph.D.
Wellspring Psychological Services