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Dear Public Health and Insurance and Real Estate Committee members,

I am a clinical psychologist and have a practice in West Hartford. Since completing an Internship at Connecticut Valley Hospital in 1981, I have worked in numerous Connecticut psychiatric, addiction and medical hospitals and have maintained a private practice since the mid-1980's.

I am writing to support the use of telehealth services in Connecticut, more specifically the following bills: \*H.B. No. 5596 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING TELEHEALTH, and \*S.B. No. 1022 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING TELEHEALTH.

When first confronted with the requirement for telehealth services due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, I had serious reservations regarding the efficacy of it's use. However, after using telehealth for the past twelve months I am both convinced of it's efficacy as well as the many advantages it provides to Connecticut residents and psychologists. Based upon extensive feedback from patients, I am now confident that the psychotherapy experience via telehealth services is comparable to an office-based setting.

Telehealth offers many advantages to both patients and practitioners. With a Behavioral Medicine subspecialty, it is not unusual for me to be working with patients with compromised immune systems, physical disabilities, severe and chronic pain disorders, post-surgical limitations in travel, palliative care and end-of-life restrictions limiting travel to my office. I also work with many elderly patients, who often have difficulty leaving their residence on a regular basis. The use of telehealth services is of great benefit for all of these patients. Other advantages for patients include: ease of scheduling given the absence of travel time, streamlined HIPPA-approved communication, increased privacy, and safety given the travel conditions experienced in New England.

As both a private practitioner and member of the Connecticut Psychological Association, I strongly support these bills to:

1. make permanent the acceptance of telehealth as a delivery method for psychological services (including audio-only telehealth) and,
2. make permanent an equivalent reimbursement rate for telehealth as for office-based services.

I appreciate your receipt of this letter of support for these two bills.

Yours truly,



Bob Deutsch PhD