

Good morning,

My name is Kathleen Garnet, and I am a licensed clinical psychologist in private practice in Glastonbury. I am writing in strong support of Bill numbers SB1022/HB5596. During this past year I have conducted psychotherapy exclusively via secure, HIPAA compliant telehealth platforms. Although initially I was concerned about how telehealth therapy would feel, both to myself and my clients, I have found that it has been effective and helpful for each of my clients.

I have clients who are elderly, have transportation issues, or struggle with chronic health problems, making it difficult for them to attend in-person therapy on a consistent basis. During this past year, we have been able to meet regularly, and this meant that they have had critically needed support during this very difficult year, and more, it has led to significant progress in their therapies.

I also see people whose work schedules do not allow them to take time during the day, or leave work in time, to meet during the day. I do offer some evening times to try to accommodate people with such schedules, but, realistically, there are a limited number of late day hours available. Being able to conduct sessions via telehealth has made it possible for them to attend therapy sessions on a regular basis as well.

I cannot think of any reason to oppose making permanent the acceptance of telehealth, including audio only, as a delivery method for psychological services. Psychotherapy should be available to all who need it, not just those who are privileged by age, health, or economic status.

I also cannot think of any reason to reimburse providers who offer telehealth services at a lower rate. My overhead has not decreased, in fact it is higher as I maintain both a professional office and a home office. Whether offered in-person or via telehealth, the work is equally challenging, difficult, and important for the individual health and well-being of our clients and for the health and well-being of our community and our world.

Thank you.

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