

To whom it may concern,

I would like to express the necessity of the permanent the acceptance of telehealth as delivery method for psychological services (including audio-only telehealth) and making permanent an equivalent reimbursement rate for telehealth as for in-person services. During this past year, almost to the day, I have been providing telehealth only services due to COVID 19 and I had my initial concerns which though this experience have been quelled. Telehealth has in no way hampered my ability to continue to provide meaningful services to my clients, and in fact has improved my ability to do so. I have seen the rates of drop out and rates of no showed appointments fall tremendously due to client's ability to attend session remotely. This reduces barriers to treatment such as transportation, time consumption, and availability of services in an area. I have child clients whose parents have seen telehealth as a blessing as they may be single parents with multiple children who were having to transport the entire family for an appointment previously and are not able to log in for an appointment without leaving the home. Insurance companies should be held to permanent equivalent reimbursement for telehealth services as the services provided are no less than those provided in person. If equivalent reimbursement is not made permanent there would be undue harm to both clinicians and clients as this would force clinicians to either take the burden on lessened income, which is a burden they already bear due to the poor standard to reimbursement, or solely see clients in person which would cause some clients to change providers due to travel time to the location of their clinician or discontinue services for similar reasons. This past year has given us the experience and data to support telehealth being a comparable and acceptable method of therapy. I urge you to support mental health of your constituents and pass HB 5596/SB 1022.

Thank you,

Courtney Haynes, LMFT  
Comprehensive Psychiatric Care  
Phone: 860-886-1508  
Fax: 860-889-4606  
200 West Town Street  
Norwich, CT 06360