

To: phtestimony@cga.ct.gov.

From: Margo Maine, PhD, FAED, CEDS

Maine & Weinstein Specialty Group

Re: Public Health Committee Public Hearings regarding Telehealth:

*H.B. No. 5596 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING TELEHEALTH

*S.B. No. 1022 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING TELEHEALTH

March 15, 2021

I am a psychologist practicing in West Hartford, with over 35 years of experience treating eating disorders. Eating disorders are serious illnesses, associated with a high morbidity and mortality rate. Among other issues, rates of suicide in those with eating disorders are elevated compared to other mental health disorders (depression, bipolar, schizophrenia).

The COVID crisis has intensified the difficulty many of our eating disorder patients face, as social distancing and isolation have been necessary to avoid exposure. For many, fear of contracting the virus may result in obsessive pursuit of nutritional remedies, including restrictive diets and fasting, hoping to increase immunity. Thus, some have experienced more difficulty managing their symptoms, some have developed eating disorders for the first time, and others have relapsed.

Telehealth has truly been a lifeline for these patients and needs to be available to them throughout the course of their illness. Some of my patients actually respond better to phone telehealth sessions than to visual platforms like Zoom, as they prefer not to be seen. To my surprise, many of my patients have been able to work extremely effectively in telehealth, as they feel safe in their homes when they are dealing with trauma or other sensitive issues.

Please approve telehealth services for the foreseeable future for all psychotherapy and psychological services. It is absolutely essential for the wellbeing of our community. Thank you.

Contact info:

Margo Maine, PhD, FAED, CEDS

Maine & Weinstein Specialty Group

433 S Main St., Suite 327

West Hartford CT 06110

mdm@mwsg.org