

Good Morning, Senator Lesser, Rep. Wood, Senator Daugherty-Abrams and Rep. Steinberg as well as members of the Insurance and Real Estate and Public Health Committees.

My name is Peter Tuccitto, I am a registered voter in the Town of East Hartford. I am here to testify regarding SB 1022 and HB 5596 An Act Concerning Telehealth.

I have been suffering for over 20 years with the severe chronic mental illness that is Bipolar Disorder. Telehealth services, such as, appointments with my Primary Care Physician, my psychologist, my psychiatrist, and various Zoom group therapies are provided for me through Hartford Healthcare, Intercommunity, Common Ground, and the IOL teaching hospital.

Telehealth has been and is currently important to me during this worldwide pandemic. I suffer with multiple comorbidities: diabetes, obesity, high blood pressure, and high cholesterol. I did not and still do not feel safe entering a waiting room with other people who could potentially be carriers of the virus, yet they remain asymptomatic.

Another major benefit of telehealth has been the ability to not waste productive time during the day driving to an appointment, waiting in a waiting room, and then making the return trip home or back to the office after the doctor's visit.

During the years prior to the Coronavirus when I did not have access to telehealth services, I missed many crucial behavioral health appointments. I often would be stuck at home with debilitating depression, ruminating on suicide, and with a lack of daily hygiene which made me feel too demoralized to even see a behavioral health service provider in person. If I had telehealth services back then, I believe the quality of my life would have been much better.

While that may be a subjective statement, I do know how telehealth has made all my healthcare needs more accessible now. I do not want to lose it. I ask you please to extend it.

Thank you for listening to my testimony today.