



February 23, 2021

The Honorable Jim Wood
Chairman, California State Assembly Health Committee
California State Capitol
1315 10th Street, Room 6005
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Chad Mayes
Vice-Chairman, California State Assembly Health Committee
California State Capitol
1315 10th Street, Room 4098
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: ATA SUPPORT FOR ASSEMBLY BILL 32

Dear Chairman Wood and Vice-Chairman Mayes,

On behalf of the American Telemedicine Association (ATA) and the over 400 organizations we represent, I am writing to voice our strong support for Assembly Bill 32, which seeks to expand Californians' access to health care services provided via telehealth.

The ATA is the only national organization whose mission revolves solely around the advancement of telehealth. Our utmost priority is ensuring that Americans have the ability to receive affordable, high-quality health care at any place and any time. The expansion of telehealth infrastructure around the country eases strain on the overburdened health care system, enabling it to provide care for millions more patients every year in an efficient and effective manner. The ATA represents a diverse and expansive coalition of technology solution providers and payers, as well as partner organizations and alliances, working together to promote the implementation of telehealth across the country, endorse responsible telehealth policy, encourage government and market normalization, and deliver education and resources designed to further the integration of virtual care through the use of various innovative technologies.

Assembly Bill 32 serves as a significant addition to California's policy framework regarding telehealth. The proposed legislation would make permanent the temporary extension of coverage for services provided via telehealth to residents who are on the state's Medi-Cal program.

As you and your colleagues have recognized over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is essential to ensure patients across the state have the ability to access health care services at any place and any time. Telehealth provides practitioners and patients with several benefits which are



specific to the context of the crisis, most notably allowing California residents to access health care without having to enter a potentially hazardous physical location.

The ATA applauds the legislature's efforts to afford Californians easier access to high-quality health care beyond the scope of the ongoing health emergency. The use of synchronous and asynchronous technologies in the delivery of health care expedites diagnosis and treatment processes by permitting doctors and patients to communicate with each other on their own time. The use of certain telehealth technologies, specifically asynchronous modalities such as emails and text messages, do not require a large amount of bandwidth to be accessible to their users. For the communities most affected by the persistent digital divide in California, specifically minority and rural populations, the availability of a wide array of telehealth technologies ensures that they are receiving the same level of care as those with access to better internet capabilities.

In mandating that the state's Medi-Cal program cover telehealth services indefinitely, Assembly Bill 32 enables economically challenged Californians to enjoy the full benefits of innovative telehealth technologies. The expanded coverage proposed in the bill will leverage technological innovation in health care to the maximum extent possible.

Again, we thank you for your strong support for telehealth. The ATA believes that this bill will expand access to the high-quality health care that Californians need and deserve. We urge you and your colleagues to vote favorably on Assembly Bill 32 for the advancement of telehealth in your state. Please do not hesitate to let us know how we can be helpful in your efforts to advance common-sense telehealth policy in California. If you have any questions or would like to discuss further the telehealth industry's perspective, please contact me at kzebley@americantelemed.org.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kyle Zebley".

Kyle Zebley
Public Policy Director
American Telemedicine Association