



February 16, 2021

The Honorable Manny Diaz, Jr.
Florida State Senate
404 South Monroe Street, Senate Building Room 306
Tallahassee, FL 32399

The Honorable Jason Brodeur
Florida State Senate
404 South Monroe Street, Senate Building Room 311
Tallahassee, FL 32399

RE: ATA SUPPORT FOR SENATE BILL 700

Dear Senator Diaz and Senator Brodeur,

On behalf of the American Telemedicine Association (ATA) and the over 400 organizations we represent, I am writing you to voice our support for Senate Bill 700.

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.

Senate Bill 700 serves as an important addition to Florida's state telehealth policy. In promoting a technology-neutral definition of telehealth, permitting the prescription of Schedule III-V medications via the appropriate telehealth technologies, and expanding the scope of services reimbursed by Florida's Medicaid agency to include those provided by means of telehealth, the proposed legislation enhances the efficacy of Florida's telehealth industry.

The ATA applauds the legislature's efforts to adopt a technology-neutral definition of telehealth. As patients search for more convenient and affordable ways to access health care, state policies should not dictate which technologies are more appropriate than others in the delivery of care so long as the practitioner believes the



standard of care is being met. The use of synchronous and asynchronous technologies in telehealth allows patients and providers to communicate whenever and wherever it is most convenient for them, expediting the diagnosis and treatment process.

Asynchronous modalities are especially beneficial in that they can be utilized even with low bandwidth connections. According to the James Madison Institute, over 2 million Floridians lack access to reliable high-speed internet, with many of those affected living in the state's rural areas. By allowing practitioners to deliver care via asynchronous modalities, this bill will grant patients who lack access to reliable broadband internet the ability to communicate effectively with their providers.

The ATA also commends the legislature for permitting telehealth providers to prescribe Schedule III-V medications to their patients. Considering the ongoing public health crisis, it is essential that Floridians are able to access to their much-needed prescription medications easily and safely. Senate Bill 700 allows for prescribers to send medications remotely, eliminating the need for patients to enter a potentially hazardous physical location to receive their prescriptions.

Finally, the ATA supports the legislature's effort to expand access to care by mandating that the state's Medicaid agency reimburse providers for services delivered via telehealth. As the pandemic persists, it is important that Floridians can access high-quality health care services without having to worry about the financial costs associated with receiving that care. State policymakers should set rational guidelines that are both fair to the provider of such services and reflect the cost savings offered to the health care system by the effective use of telehealth technologies. The Florida legislature should recognize the costs savings telehealth brings to health care and allow both patients and payers to benefit from the efficiencies of technology.

Again, we thank you for your strong support for telehealth. The ATA believes that the passage of this bill would represent significant progress in ensuring that Florida residents have access to the affordable, high-quality care they need and deserve. Please do not hesitate to let us know how we can be helpful in your efforts to advance common-sense telehealth policy in Florida. 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,

Kyle Zebley
Public Policy Director
American Telemedicine Association