



February 24, 2021

The Honorable Judy Lee
Chairwoman, North Dakota Senate Human Services Committee
North Dakota State Senate
600 East Boulevard Avenue
Bismarck, ND 58505

The Honorable Kristin Roers
Vice-Chairwoman, North Dakota Senate Human Services Committee
North Dakota State Senate
600 East Boulevard Avenue
Bismarck, ND 58505

RE: ATA SUPPORT FOR HB 1151

Dear Chairwoman Lee and Vice Chairwoman Roers,

On behalf of the American Telemedicine Association (ATA) and the over 400 organizations we represent, I am writing you to encourage you and your colleagues to vote favorably for HB 1151, which would hold teledentistry in North Dakota to the same standard of care as in-person dental care.

The ATA is the only national organization completely focused on advancing telehealth and is committed to ensuring that everyone has access to safe, affordable, and high-quality care when and where they need it. This empowers the health care system to provide more services to more patients in an efficacious manner. The ATA represents a broad and inclusive coalition of technology solution providers and payers, as well as partner organizations and alliances, working to advance industry adoption of telehealth (including teledentistry), promote responsible policy, advocate for government and market normalization, and provide education and resources to help integrate virtual care into emerging, value-based modalities.

HB 1151 serves as a vital addition to North Dakota's framework for the regulation of telehealth, expanding the state's telehealth infrastructure to benefit any and all citizens who hope to access affordable, high-quality dental care online.

First, the ATA strongly supports how the bill permits examinations and evaluations performed before treatment or diagnosis to be done via telehealth. In promoting language that holds teledentistry to the same standard of care as in-person care, this bill would make it easier for



citizens across the state to access high-quality dental care at a reasonable price where and when they need it. Holding telehealth to a higher standard than in-person care serves as an unnecessary and arbitrary barrier to ensuring that North Dakotans are receiving the dental care they need. This is especially important considering the context of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, throughout which federal and state legislatures are utilizing the benefits of telehealth and teledentistry to provide care in a safe, socially distanced manner.

The ATA also supports language in the bill which allows dentists who have performed telehealth examinations or evaluations to prescribe medications. As stated above, such advancements in the field of virtual care will promote the development of teledentistry services in North Dakota, removing impediments to citizens' access of prescription medications and medical devices.

While the ATA applauds the bill's efforts to allow for the use of both videoconferencing and store-and-forward technologies examinations performed virtually, the ATA wants to emphasize its commitment to promoting technology-neutral language in telehealth-related policy. We would like you to consider the unintended consequences of language which gives preferences to specific modalities and technologies rather than ensuring all providers, whether virtual or in-person, meet the standard of care. As patients and consumers seek more convenient and affordable ways to access health care, regulatory frameworks should not require that health care providers always use certain types of technology to deliver virtual care. The expanded use of telehealth to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic has provided additional evidence to illustrate that, when used appropriately, telehealth and the use of safe and efficient technologies to deliver virtual care to patients improves health care quality and outcomes while reducing the cost of that care. ATA is aware that this legislation brings parity to the practice of dentistry and medicine using remote technology and that changes to the allowable technology language may be more appropriate for another time.

The ATA is confident that the passage of this bill will increase access to affordable, high-quality dental care, promote the efficacy of North Dakota's health care industry, and allow more patients to have access to the dental care they want, need, and deserve. These advancements are essential for the continued growth and use of telehealth technologies and will benefit patients and practitioners alike.

Again, we thank you for your support of telehealth and teledentistry. We encourage the Senate Human Services Committee to vote favorably on HB 1151. Particularly during a global pandemic, it is critical that North Dakotans can access health care services as easily as possible within the appropriate standard of care. Please do not hesitate to let us know how we can be helpful to your efforts to advance common sense telehealth policy in North Dakota. If you have



any questions or would like to further discuss 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