



February 12, 2021

The Honorable Greg McCortney
Oklahoma State Senate
2300 N. Lincoln Blvd., Room 534
Oklahoma City, OK 73105

The Honorable Carl Newton
Oklahoma House of Representatives
2300 N. Lincoln Blvd., Room 507
Oklahoma City, OK 73105

RE: ATA SUPPORT FOR SENATE BILL 673

Dear Senator McCortney and Representative Newton,

On behalf of the American Telemedicine Association (ATA) and the over 400 organizations we represent, I am writing to voice our support for Senate Bill 673, which seeks to establish a more technology-neutral definition of telemedicine in Oklahoma.

The ATA is the only national organization whose mission revolves solely around the advancement of telemedicine in the United States. Our utmost priority is ensuring that Americans can access affordable, high-quality health care at any place and any time. The expansion of telemedicine 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 telemedicine across the country, endorse responsible telemedicine 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 673 serves as an important addition to Oklahoma's state telemedicine policy. The proposed legislation explicitly includes both synchronous, asynchronous, and remote patient monitoring technologies in the definition of telemedicine as it relates to Oklahoma's insurance and professions and occupations codes.

These changes are necessary to empower providers to use their clinical judgment to determine the appropriate telehealth modality --whether real-time or non-real time-- to uphold the standard of care and serve the best interest of Oklahoma patients. Across the country, providers are increasingly relying on asynchronous (or "store and forward") telehealth technologies to establish patient relationships, perform patient evaluations, and appropriately prescribe medication in many fields. In addition, providers are



increasingly relying on remote patient monitoring technologies to push care out of the hospital, clinic or doctor's office and into the home, where providers can continually monitor, collect and analyze a patient's physiologic data to create a care management plans for patients, especially useful for those with chronic conditions.

Additionally, the use of asynchronous technologies, which can be utilized even with low bandwidth connections, provide patients who lack access to reliable internet connections with the ability to communicate effectively with their providers. Across Oklahoma, 635,000 individuals do not have consistent access to high-speed internet connections. By enabling Oklahoma residents to receive telemedicine services through the use of asynchronous modalities, the legislature ensures that unserved and underserved Oklahomans receive the same level of access as those who have access to more reliable broadband connections.

As patients and consumers seek more convenient and affordable ways to access health care, state policies should not mandate which types of technologies are more appropriate than others in the delivery of health care services. If the health care professional providing telemedicine services determines, based on professional judgment, that the standard of care can be met, then the professional should be able to use an assortment of appropriate technologies to provide care to their patients.

The expanded use of telemedicine to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic has evidenced the usefulness of an assortment of technologies in the practice of telemedicine, allowing practitioners to triage patients with symptoms of the disease and maintain continuous care for those without COVID-19. Moreover, providers are increasingly relying on remote patient monitoring technologies to push care out of the hospital or doctor's office and into the home, where providers can continually monitor, collect, and analyze a patient's physiologic data on a real-time basis to create a care management plan. The permissive definition offered by Oklahoma's legislature will allow practitioners and patients to enjoy the full benefits of these innovative telemedicine technologies.

Again, we thank you for your strong interest in and support for telehealth. We urge the Oklahoma legislature to pass Senate Bill 673 for the advancement of telemedicine in your state. In the context of the ongoing pandemic, it is critical that we codify policies that will make it easier for Oklahomans to access affordable, quality care from the safety of their homes.

Please do not hesitate to let us know how we can be helpful to your efforts to advance common-sense telemedicine policy in Oklahoma. If you have any questions or would like to discuss further the telemedicine 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