



February 8, 2021

The Honorable Philip Cortez  
Texas House of Representatives  
1100 Congress Ave, Room E2.408  
Austin, TX 78701

**RE: ATA SUPPORT FOR HOUSE BILL 280**

On behalf of the American Telemedicine Association (ATA) and the over 400 organizations we represent, I am writing to express our strong support for House Bill 280, which outlines a plan for the expansion of telemedicine and telehealth services in Texas.

The ATA is the only national organization completely focused on advancing telehealth. We are 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 millions 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, promote responsible policy, advocate for government and market normalization, and provide education and resources to help integrate virtual care into emerging, value-based modalities.

House Bill 280 serves as an important addition to Texas' state telehealth policy. The proposed legislation mandates that an action plan be established for the expansion of Texans' access to telemedicine medical services and telehealth services.

The ATA applauds the legislature's attempt to lay the groundwork for the enhancement of telemedicine and telehealth services in Texas. Across the United States, patients and consumers are seeking more affordable and efficient ways to access the health care they need. Using innovative telehealth technologies, practitioners and patients are able to interact with each other at any place and any time. Asynchronous modalities, such as emails and text messages, allow providers and patients to communicate on their own time, expediting the diagnostic and treatment processes. Most recently, the expanded use of telehealth to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic has evidenced the usefulness of a variety of technological modalities in the delivery of virtual care, allowing practitioners to triage patients with symptoms of the disease and maintain continuous contact with those not afflicted with COVID-19.

Additionally, the expansion of telehealth infrastructure would allow unserved and underserved Texans enhanced access to affordable, high-quality health care services. Texas residents living in rural areas are most affected by the current lack of access to health care across the state; according to a report in the *Texas Observer*, more than one-fifth of Texas' 254 counties have one doctor or no doctors at all. Additionally, the physician-to-patient ratio in the state of 54 per 100,000 residents is substantially lower than the national average of 76 per 100,000 residents. The ATA commends your efforts to create more navigable pathways for Texans to receive affordable, quality health care through telehealth.



Again, we thank you for your strong support of telehealth in Texas. We urge you and your colleagues to pass House Bill 280 in the interest of laying the groundwork to expand Texans' easy and efficient access to affordable, quality health care. Please do not hesitate to let us know how we can be helpful to your efforts to advance common-sense telehealth policy in Texas. If you have any questions or would like to discuss further the telehealth industry's perspective, please contact me at [kzebley@americantelemed.org](mailto:kzebley@americantelemed.org).

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kyle Zebley".

Kyle Zebley  
Public Policy Director  
American Telemedicine Association