



March 9, 2021

The Honorable Bryan Terry
Chair, Tennessee House Health Committee
Cordell Hull State Office Building
425 Rep. John Lewis Way N., Suite 646
Nashville, TN 37243

The Honorable Tom Leatherwood
Vice-Chair, Tennessee House Health Committee
Cordell Hull State Office Building
425 Rep. John Lewis Way N., Suite 514
Nashville, TN 37243

RE: ATA SUPPORT FOR HOUSE BILL 552

On behalf of the American Telemedicine Association and the over 400 organizations we represent, I am writing to voice our support for House Bill 552.

The ATA is the only organization dedicated solely to the advancement of telehealth in the United States. Our primary objective is to provide Americans with affordable, high-quality health care whenever and wherever they need it. The use of telehealth services eases the burden placed on the nation's health care infrastructure, allowing the system to deliver services to millions more patients efficiently and effectively. 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.

The ATA applauds the legislature's efforts to expand Tennessee residents' access to telehealth services by adopting a technology-neutral definition of telehealth and a broad definition of "store-and-forward" modalities in the state's practice code. These changes appropriately capture how providers rely on asynchronous (or "store-and-forward") technologies, which are critical to the industry as they are used to quickly and conveniently transmit a patient's health data, vital signs, digital diagnostic images, or other physiological data.

Across the country, patients are seeking more affordable and convenient means to access the health care services they need and deserve. The ATA believes that state legislatures should not pick winners and losers in terms of which technologies are more appropriate than others for use in the delivery of telehealth services. Instead, policymakers should defer this decision to the licensed practitioner who can determine, in his or her professional opinion, which technologies are necessary to provide care that meets the



standard of care for the condition presented by the patient. Permitting Tennessee health care professionals to use a full range of the appropriate asynchronous technologies - including those which do and do not use camera devices - in the practice of telehealth helps to eliminate barriers to health care access for Tennessee residents, especially the 492,000 Tennesseans whose residences do not have the bandwidth to sustain the high-speed internet connections necessary to operate audiovisual modalities.

We thank you for your support of telehealth in Tennessee. In the context of the ongoing pandemic, it is critical that state legislatures enable their constituents to access their much-needed health care services as easily and effectively as possible. We urge you and your colleagues to pass House Bill 552 in the interest of expanding Tennesseans' safe and easy access to affordable, high-quality health care. Please let us know how we can be helpful in your efforts to adopt sensible telehealth policy in Tennessee. 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, appearing to read "Kyle Zebley".

Kyle Zebley
Public Policy Director
American Telemedicine Association