



April 19, 2021

The Honorable Larry Bagley
Chairman, Louisiana House Health and Welfare Committee
Louisiana House of Representatives
900 N. 3rd St.
Baton Rouge, LA 70802

The Honorable Christopher Turner
Vice Chair, Louisiana House Health and Welfare Committee
Louisiana House of Representatives
900 N. 3rd St.
Baton Rouge, LA 70802

RE: ATA SUPPORT FOR HOUSE BILL 270

On behalf of the American Telemedicine Association (ATA) and the over 400 organizations we represent, I am writing to voice our strong support for House Bill 270, which would expand Louisianans' access to telehealth and telemedicine services.

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.

House Bill 270 serves as an important addition to Louisiana's state telemedicine policy. The proposed legislation amends the definition of telemedicine to include electronic communications, information technology, asynchronous store-and-forward transfer technology, and synchronous modalities. The definition of telehealth is revised to include the same technologies as the definition of telemedicine to diagnose, treat, and monitor remotely patients in the state. Finally, the proposed legislation allows for physicians licensed in Louisiana to consult with physicians licensed in other states or jurisdictions without limitation.

The ATA applauds the Louisiana legislature for its efforts to broaden and simplify definitions of telemedicine and telehealth. Across the country, providers are relying increasingly on asynchronous (or "store-and-forward") technologies to diagnose and treat patients in many fields. In addition, providers are utilizing remote patient monitoring technologies to move care out of the hospital, clinic, or doctor's office and into the patient's



home, where providers can continually monitor, collect and analyze a patient's physiologic data to create a care management plan, especially for those with chronic conditions.

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 or telehealth 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 changes proposed in House Bill 270 are necessary to empower providers to use their clinical judgment to determine the appropriate modality, whether synchronous or asynchronous, to uphold the standard of care and serve the best interest of Louisiana patients.

Additionally, the use of asynchronous technologies, which can be utilized even with low bandwidth connections, provides patients who lack access to reliable internet connections with the ability to communicate effectively with their providers. Across Louisiana, over 400,000 individuals do not have consistent access to high-speed internet connections. By enabling Louisiana residents to receive telemedicine and telehealth services through the use of asynchronous modalities, the legislature ensures that unserved and underserved Louisianans receive the same level of access as those who have access to more reliable broadband connections.

House Bill 270 also takes the important step of allowing practicing physicians in Louisiana to consult with physicians licensed in other states without the requirement that the out-of-state physicians be licensed in Louisiana. In permitting Louisiana physicians to consult with out-of-state medical experts via communications technologies, the legislature enables Louisiana patients through Louisiana-licensed physicians to benefit from the nation's top medical professionals in their search for advice on diseases and medical concerns.

Again, we thank you for your strong interest in and support for telehealth. We urge you and your colleagues to pass House Bill 270 for the advancement of telemedicine and telehealth in Louisiana. In the context of the ongoing pandemic, it is critical that we codify policies that will make it easier for Louisianans to access affordable, high-quality health care. Please do not hesitate to let us know how we can be helpful to your efforts to advance common-sense telemedicine policy. 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, appearing to read "Kyle Zebley".

Kyle Zebley
Public Policy Director
American Telemedicine Association