



May 27, 2021

The Honorable Napoleon Harris, III  
Chair, Illinois Senate Insurance Committee  
Illinois State Senate  
401 S. 2<sup>nd</sup> St., Room 413  
Springfield, IL 62706

The Honorable Antonio Muñoz  
Vice-Chair, Illinois Senate Insurance Committee  
Illinois State Senate  
401 S. 2<sup>nd</sup> St., Room 323A  
Springfield, IL 62706

**RE: ATA SUPPORT FOR HOUSE BILL 3308**

Dear Chair Harris and Vice-Chair Muñoz,

On behalf of the American Telemedicine Association (ATA) and the over 400 organizations we represent, I am writing to voice our support for House Bill 3308, which would expand Illinois residents' access to telehealth services.

The ATA is the only national organization whose mission revolves solely around the advancement of telehealth in the United States. Our utmost priority is ensuring that Americans have access to affordable, high-quality health care when and where they need it. The expansion of telehealth 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 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 believes that House Bill 3308 moves Illinois' telehealth policy in the right direction. Provisions in the bill allow for the expanded coverage of and reimbursement for telehealth services, granting Illinoisans easier access to high-quality, affordable care.

Our organization supports the legislature's efforts to expand patient access to telehealth services by requiring health insurance policies to cover and reimburse for a broader range of telehealth services. Under existing statute, health insurance policies only have to cover services provided by way of an interactive telecommunications system, currently defined as an audio and video system permitting two-way, live interactive communication between the patient and the distant site health care provider. House Bill 3308 requires health insurance policies to cover any telehealth service, defined as those involved in the evaluation, diagnosis, or interpretation of electronically transmitted patient-specific data between a remote location and a licensed health care professional that generates interaction or treatment recommendations. The proposed legislation also stipulates that health insurance policies must reimburse providers for telehealth services provided through an interactive telecommunications system on the same basis, in the same manner, and at the same reimbursement rate that would apply to the services if the services had been delivered via an in-person encounter. The amended definition of an interactive telecommunications system includes an audio and video system, an audio-only telephone system, or any other telecommunications system permitting 2-way, synchronous interactive communication between a patient and a health care professional. By expanding the scope of services eligible for



coverage and reimbursement by health insurance policies, House Bill 3308 would make it easier for Illinois residents to access quality health care at any place and any time without having to worry about the potential financial burdens associated with receiving that care.

Regarding the rate of reimbursement for telehealth services, the ATA maintains that state policymakers should set rational guidelines that are both fair to the provider of such services and reflect the cost savings offered to the health care system by the effective use of telehealth technologies.

The ATA also applauds the legislature for its efforts to adopt a technologically permissive definition of telehealth in the professions, occupations, and business operations code. The amended definition of telehealth services includes, along with services provided through synchronous technologies, those delivered via asynchronous store and forward systems, remote patient monitoring technologies, e-visits, and virtual check-ins. Across the country, providers are relying increasingly on asynchronous telehealth technologies to perform patient evaluations in many fields. In addition, providers are utilizing remote patient monitoring technologies to bring care into the home, where providers can continually monitor, collect, and analyze a patient's physiologic data while creating care management plans for patients, especially 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. Those decisions are better left to the patients and treating health care providers. The changes proposed in House Bill 3308 would enable providers to use clinical judgment to determine which telehealth modality is most appropriate and sufficient to treat the condition presented by the patient, all while upholding the standard of care.

Additionally, the use of asynchronous technologies, which can be utilized even with low bandwidth connections, allows patients who lack access to reliable internet connections to communicate effectively with their providers conveniently from home. Across Illinois, 727,000 individuals do not have consistent access to high-speed internet connections. By enabling Illinois residents to receive telehealth services through the use of asynchronous modalities, the legislature ensures that unserved and underserved Illinoisans receive the same level of access to quality health care as those who have the ability to utilize more reliable broadband connections.

We urge you and your colleagues to support House Bill 3308 for the advancement of telehealth in your state. In the context of the ongoing pandemic, it is critical that we codify policies that will make it easier for Illinoisans 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 telehealth policy in Illinois. 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