



May 10, 2021

The Honorable Lois W. Kolkhorst  
Chair, Texas Senate Committee on Health & Human Services  
Texas State Senate  
1100 Congress Ave.  
Austin, TX 78701

The Honorable Charles Perry  
Vice Chair, Texas Senate Committee on Health & Human Services  
Texas State Senate  
1100 Congress Ave.  
Austin, TX 78701

**RE: ATA SUPPORT FOR HOUSE BILL 4**

Dear Chair Kolkhorst and Vice Chair Perry:

On behalf of the American Telemedicine Association (ATA) and the over 400 organizations we represent, I am writing you in support of House Bill 4.

The ATA is the only national organization whose mission revolves solely around the advancement of telemedicine. Our utmost priority is ensuring that Americans have the ability to receive affordable, high-quality health care whenever and wherever they need it. 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.

The ATA applauds the legislature's efforts to expand Texas' state telemedicine policy. If passed, House Bill 4 would codify temporary flexibilities regarding the provision of services through telecommunications and information technology under the state's Medicaid program and other public benefits programs. Simply put, public health care plans would provide enrollees with the option to receive telemedicine services from practitioners in a variety of fields, which will increase access to needed care.

Our organization approves of the legislature's efforts to allow public health insurance plans to offer enrollees high-quality health care services via the appropriate telemedicine technologies. Across the country, patients and consumers are searching for more convenient and affordable ways to access the health care services they want and need. The expanded use of telemedicine 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 and patients to interact with each other from the comfort and safety of their



homes. Allowing Texas Medicaid enrollees to receive a variety of health care services, including those related to behavioral health, via innovative telemedicine technologies would remove obstacles for Texans who desire to access high-quality remote health care services.

Regarding the modalities which the commission should approve for use in the delivery of telemedicine services, the ATA supports the adoption of technology-neutral telemedicine policies that enable practitioners to utilize synchronous (real-time) and asynchronous (non-real-time) technologies in the delivery of care. The ATA maintains that state legislatures should not restrict the modalities which practitioners may use when providing care to patients, permitting licensed health care professionals to determine which technologies are sufficient to meet the standard of care for the condition presented by the patient. As the federal government contemplates telehealth modalities permissible for use in its Medicaid program, Texas would be able to take immediate advantage of any federal changes without having to go through additional legislative processes by choosing to adopt technology-neutral policy.

Additionally, the provisions in House Bill 4 would make it easier for Texas residents to access quality health care without having to worry about the potential financial burdens associated with receiving that care. As far as the rate of reimbursement for telemedicine services is concerned, 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.

Again, we thank you for your support of telemedicine policy in Texas. In the context of the ongoing health crisis, it is essential that Texas residents have safe and efficacious access to the health care they need and deserve. We urge you and your colleagues pass House Bill 4 in the interest of expanding Texans' easy and efficient access to affordable, quality health care. Please do not hesitate to let us know how we can be helpful in your efforts to advance common-sense telemedicine policy in Texas. If you have any questions or would like to discuss further the telemedicine 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