



June 11, 2021

The Honorable Mike Shirkey
Majority Leader, Michigan State Senate
Michigan State Capitol
100 N. Capitol Ave., Room S-102
Lansing, MI 48933

RE: ATA SUPPORT FOR HOUSE BILL 4356 – SENATE SUBSTITUTE 1

Senator Shirkey:

On behalf of the American Telemedicine Association (ATA) and the over 400 organizations we represent, I am writing to express our support for House Bill 4356.

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 have the ability to receive affordable, first-rate health care when and where 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.

In its current form, House Bill 4356 represents an important addition to Michigan's state telemedicine policy. The proposed legislation allows physicians to examine and evaluate their patients using telemedicine so long as the standard of care is maintained at the same level as if the examination and evaluation were performed in person and the patient has had an in-person examination and evaluation within the immediately preceding two years. House Bill 4356 also includes a technology-neutral definition of telemedicine as it relates to ocular health.

The ATA applauds the legislature's efforts to enable the use of telemedicine technologies in the practice of eye care in Michigan. The language in House Bill 4356 permits an examination and evaluation of a patient for ocular health by means of telemedicine technologies under certain circumstances and enables a Michigan-licensed physician to renew a patient's contact lens prescription virtually. Permitting licensed physicians to provide these ocular care services via the appropriate technologies would grant Michigan residents safe and easy access to high-quality, affordable health care whenever and wherever they need it. This bill serves as yet another example of how innovative telemedicine technologies can increase patient access to the health care services they need and deserve.



Additionally, our organization supports the legislature's effort to adopt a technology-neutral definition of telemedicine as it relates to ocular care, one that enables practitioners to examine and evaluate patients using both synchronous and asynchronous (store-and-forward) technologies. The ATA maintains that state legislatures should not determine which technologies are more appropriate than others for use in the delivery of telemedicine services. Instead, policymakers should defer this decision to the licensed practitioner delivering those services. This practitioner, on the basis of his or her professional opinion, can determine which technologies are necessary to meet the standard of care for the condition presented by the patient.

We thank you for your support for telemedicine. We encourage you and your colleagues to vote favorably on House Bill 4356 in the interest of expanding Michigan residents' access to telemedicine services. Please let us know how we can be helpful in your efforts to adopt sensible telemedicine policy in Michigan. 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