



July 1, 2021

The Honorable Phil Murphy
Governor of the State of New Jersey
Office of the Governor
PO Box 001
Trenton, NJ 08625

RE: ATA SUPPORT FOR SENATE BILL 2559

Dear Governor Murphy,

On behalf of the American Telemedicine Association (ATA) and the over 400 organizations we represent, I am writing to urge you to sign S2559, a bill related to telehealth.

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 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 supports S2559 for several reasons. First, the proposed legislation includes technology-neutral provisions, prohibiting carriers from restricting the ability of providers to use a variety of appropriate telehealth modalities, both synchronous and asynchronous, in the delivery of telehealth. Our organization maintains that state legislatures should not determine which technologies are more appropriate than others for use in the provision of remote care. Instead, policymakers should defer this decision to the licensed practitioner delivering telehealth 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. Without this bill, New Jersey practitioners will be forced to use real-time technologies in the provision of health care services, making it an outlier among states seeking to advance their telehealth policy.

Additionally, our organization supports language in the bill which prohibits health insurance carriers from imposing restrictions on the location or setting of both the distant sites used by a health care provider to provide services using telehealth and the originating sites where patients receiving those services are located. This provision will make it easier for New Jersey residents to access high-quality, affordable



health care at a time and place that is convenient for them and enable practitioners to diagnose and treat patients more efficiently and effectively.

Finally, we would like to highlight that the use of telehealth technologies has the opportunity to lower system-wide health care costs significantly over time. This can be accomplished by:

- (1) Avoiding expensive healthcare costs by diverting patients away from more costly services, such as emergency room visits.
- (2) Providing early diagnoses of serious illnesses that would have been more expensive to treat if they had not caught earlier.
- (3) Saving time for patients and practitioners alike, allowing them to use their time more efficiently and effectively.

Much of the research claiming that telehealth increases total costs actually reflects an increase in health care utilization; in other words, costs went up because more people were getting care. While the ATA understands the financial realities facing state governments, we strongly believe that the additional access to health care that telehealth offers patients who historically have been underserved is a benefit that cannot be overlooked.

We strongly urge you to sign S2559 into law in the interest of expanding New Jersey residents' access to high-quality, affordable care. This bill has the unanimous support of both chambers of the New Jersey legislature. While providers overwhelmingly acknowledge that their patients like telehealth and agree it has improved the health of patients, the ATA is concerned that providers will not continue offering patients the option of telehealth visits without fair reimbursement rates. In a recent survey of over 1500 providers, [upwards of 82%](#) said that "low or no reimbursement" would be the top barrier for them to continuing offer the option of telehealth visits to patients after the pandemic.

Please do not hesitate to let us know how we can be helpful to your efforts to advance common-sense telehealth policy in New Jersey. If you have any questions or would like to further discuss the telehealth industry's perspective, please contact kzebley@americantelemed.org.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kyle Zebley".

Kyle Zebley
Public Policy Director
American Telemedicine Association