



August 20, 2021

Maroulla S. Gleaton, M.D.
Chair, Maine Board of Licensure in Medicine
137 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

Christopher R. Ross, P.A.
Secretary, Maine Board of Licensure in Medicine
137 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

**RE: ATA COMMENTS ON MAINE BOARD OF LICENSURE IN MEDICINE'S
TELEHEALTH RULEMAKING**

Dear Dr. Gleaton and Mr. Ross,

L.D. 791, approved by Governor Mills on June 21, 2021, amended the Board of Licensure in Medicine's statute by adding 32 M.R.S. § 3300-FF, under which the Board "shall adopt rules governing telehealth services" and establishing "standards of practice and appropriate restrictions for the various types and forms of telehealth services." On behalf of the American Telemedicine Association (ATA) and the over 400 organizations we represent, I am writing to highlight the various benefits of telehealth for the Board to consider during the rulemaking process.

The ATA is the only national organization completely focused on advancing telehealth, and we are committed to ensuring that everyone has access to safe, affordable, and high-quality care whenever and wherever they need it. The practice of telehealth empowers the health care system to provide services to millions more patients every year in an efficient and efficacious manner. The ATA represents a broad and inclusive coalition of technology solution providers and payers, as well as partner organizations and alliances, working to advance industry adoption of telehealth, promote responsible policy, advocate for government and market normalization, and provide the education and resources necessary to integrate virtual care into emerging, value-based modalities.

Across the country, providers are relying increasingly on synchronous (real-time) technologies and asynchronous (or store-and-forward) modalities to establish patient relationships, perform patient evaluations, and prescribe medication appropriately in many medical fields. In addition, providers are utilizing remote patient monitoring technologies to push care out hospitals, clinics, and doctor's offices and into the home, where providers can continually monitor, collect, and analyze a patient's physiologic data to create care management plans for patients, especially those with chronic conditions. Our organization would like to take this opportunity to emphasize the various benefits that telehealth offers to patients and providers in Maine. These include:

Protecting the well-being of patients and providers throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. The onset of COVID-19 has resulted in the proliferation of telehealth technologies among both patients and providers, allowing them to interact and consult with each other without entering potentially hazardous physical locations. The expanded use of telehealth to respond to the pandemic has provided additional



evidence to demonstrate that, when used appropriately, telehealth and the use of safe and efficient technologies to deliver virtual care to patients improves health care quality and outcomes while reducing the cost of that care.

Increasing access to care. Telehealth technologies have enabled providers to overcome arbitrary geographic barriers that would limit Maine residents' access to the health care services they want, need, and deserve. Asynchronous technologies have proven particularly useful in this endeavor. According to BroadbandNow, [47,000 Maine residents](#) do not have access to the reliable, high-speed internet capabilities necessary to utilize real-time, audiovisual technologies. The use of asynchronous technologies, which are accessible even with low bandwidth, allows underserved individuals, especially those in rural areas, to receive the same level of health care as those with access to high-speed internet connections.

Enabling efficiency in health care: The utilization of telehealth technologies allows patients to seek medical advice from physicians, dentists, optometrists, and other providers at a time and place that is convenient for them. According to Maine's [Center for Disease Control & Prevention](#), 50% of the state's land area is almost completely uninhabited; 40% of the population lives in one of Maine's 11 rural counties. The use of telehealth technologies eliminates the need for rural Mainers to travel long distances to receive high-quality care.

In the context of the ongoing pandemic, it is critical any rules promulgated to implement the provisions of L.D. 791 from the recent legislative session make it easier for Maine residents 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 the Board's efforts. With members located across the country, the ATA has the advantage of a national perspective, and we are prepared to provide the Board with examples of best practices adopted by boards in similarly situated states. 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