



Health. Virtually. Everywhere.

January 19, 2022

The Honorable Sharon Cooper
Chairwoman, Georgia House Committee on Health & Human Services
Georgia House of Representatives
206 Washington St SW, Room 436
Atlanta, GA 30334

The Honorable Mark Newton
Vice Chairman, Georgia House Committee on Health & Human Services
Coverdell Legislative Office Building
18 Capitol Square SW, Room 601-H
Atlanta, GA 30334

RE: ATA SUPPORT FOR HOUSE BILL 629

Chairwoman Cooper and Vice Chairman Newton:

Chairwoman Cooper and Vice Chairman Newton: 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 629, which would permit optometrists and ophthalmologists to engage in the practice of telemedicine when delivering ocular health care services.

The ATA is the only organization dedicated solely to the advancement of telemedicine 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 telemedicine services eases the burden placed on the nation's health care infrastructure, allowing the system to provide for millions more patients efficiently and effectively. 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.

House Bill 629 serves as a step forward for Georgia's telemedicine policy as it applies to optometry and ophthalmology. The proposed legislation enables optometrists and ophthalmologists to conduct vision tests using telemedicine technologies in accordance with the applicable standard of care, paving the way for the expanded use of these innovative technologies in the field of eye care.

The ATA applauds the legislature's efforts to enable the use of telemedicine technologies in the practice of eye care in Georgia. Our organization maintains that policymakers should not



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mandate which technological modalities practitioners may use while delivering care to their patients so long as the practitioners are providing services that meet the standard of care and fall within the scope of their practices. While House Bill 629 allows eye care providers to utilize telemedicine technologies to care for their patients, it makes no adjustments to the standards to which Georgia practitioners are held. Any licensed practitioner delivering care via telemedicine who fails to meet the standard of care for the condition presented by the patient could still be investigated and disciplined by the appropriate state licensing board. Simply put, allowing licensed practitioners to provide and prescribe ocular care services via the appropriate technologies would grant Georgia residents the opportunity to access high-quality, affordable health care at any place and any time, enabling providers to reach patients in underserved and unserved areas.

We thank you for your efforts to expand telemedicine in Georgia. In the context of the ongoing pandemic, it is essential that state legislatures create pathways for their citizens to access their much-needed health care services as easily and efficiently as possible. Please let us know how we can be helpful in your efforts to adopt sensible telemedicine policy in Georgia. If you have any questions or would like to discuss the telemedicine industry's perspective further, please contact me at kzebley@americantelemed.org.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kyle Zebley", is written over a light gray circular watermark that contains the text "AMERICAN TELEMEDICINE ASSOCIATION".

Kyle Zebley
Vice President of Public Policy
American Telemedicine Association