



March 17, 2022

The Honorable Jeanie Riddle
Chairwoman, Missouri Senate Professional Registration Committee
Missouri State Senate
201 W Capitol Ave., Room #321
Jefferson City, Missouri 65101

The Honorable Eric Burlison
Vice-Chairman, Missouri Senate Professional Registration Committee
Missouri State Senate
201 W Capitol Ave., Room #221
Jefferson City, Missouri 65101

RE: ATA ACTION SUPPORT FOR SENATE BILL 1002

Dear Chairwoman Riddle and Vice-Chairman Burlison,

On behalf of ATA Action, I am writing you to express our support for Senate Bill 1002.

ATA Action, the American Telemedicine Association's affiliated trade association focused on advocacy, advances policy to ensure all individuals have permanent access to telehealth services across the care continuum. ATA Action supports the enactment of state and federal telehealth coverage and fair payment policies to secure telehealth access for all Americans, including those in rural and underserved communities. ATA Action recognizes that telehealth and virtual care have the potential to truly transform the health care delivery system – by improving patient outcomes, enhancing safety and effectiveness of care, addressing health disparities, and reducing costs – if only allowed to flourish.

Senate Bill 1002 serves as a rational expansion of Missouri's state telehealth policy. The proposed legislation enables physicians licensed and in good standing in another state, another territory, or the military and who have been licensed for at least one year in such jurisdiction to submit an application for expedited licensure in this state.

ATA Action applauds the Legislature for permitting qualified, out-of-state physicians to provide health care services to Missouri patients without needing to complete additional examination, educational, or other experience requirements. Such a provision will make it substantially easier for qualified physicians to deliver high-quality care to Missouri patients.

However, our organization suggests implementing a blanket licensure reciprocity policy that applies to all health care providers instead of simply making it easier for out-of-state physicians to obtain a Missouri license. ATA Action believes that patients should be able to receive virtual

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care from their preferred providers – regardless of that provider’s physical location – so long as the provider is licensed and in good standing in his or her home state, is utilizing the appropriate technology to uphold the established standard of care, and can still be held accountable by the appropriate Missouri boards and state agencies should any issues arise from treatment of a Missouri patient. By granting practice privileges to out-of-state health care providers that maintain good standing in their own states, Missouri patients will have the opportunity to connect with qualified practitioners whenever and wherever their need for care arises. Policies which enable out-of-state providers to practice at the top of their license and deliver high-quality health care via telehealth remove arbitrary geographical barriers that limit patients’ access to the health care services they want, need, and deserve.

Governors and legislatures across the country responded quickly to the spread of COVID-19 by providing licensure flexibilities that allowed out-of-state providers who were licensed and in good standing in their home states to practice without having to navigate the often-burdensome licensure requirements of other states. This public policy experiment was met with great success, as patients with non-emergent conditions were given the opportunity to receive timely care via telehealth technologies not only for COVID-related illnesses but also for a myriad of other chronic and acute issues. In response to these flexibilities, our member organizations leveraged their technology platforms and provider networks to increase the supply of health care professionals dramatically to meet surges in demand, ultimately serving millions of Americans who would otherwise never have received care. Notably, there was not an increase in patient complaints nor reported harm to patients from the implementation of this policy nationwide.

Given the overwhelmingly positive outcomes of this public policy trial, ATA Action believes that the time is now to make these out-of-state licensure flexibilities a permanent fixture through legislation. Other states have already found successful public policy formulas to implement these changes. One such model involves a simple registration process that requires the out-of-state health care provider to show that they (1) are licensed and in good standing in his or her home state, (2) maintain liability coverage similar to if they were providing services in person, (3) do not open an office in the state, and (4) only use approved pharmacies to dispense prescription drugs. Again, any out-of-state provider would still be subject to the laws and regulations of Missouri, would operate under the authority and enforcement of the state regulatory boards, and could have their registration revoked and penalties levied in the same manner as a provider delivering services in person.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. We encourage you and your colleagues to pass Senate Bill 1002 and consider our amendments in the interest of expanding patients’ access to affordable, high-quality care. Please let us know if there is anything that we can do to assist you in your efforts to adopt practical telehealth policy in Missouri.

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If you have any questions or would like to engage in additional discussion regarding the telehealth industry's perspective, please contact me at kzebley@ataaction.org.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kyle Zebley", is written over a light gray dotted line.

Kyle Zebley
Executive Director
ATA Action