



April 20, 2022

The Honorable Larry Bagley
Chairman, Louisiana House Health and Welfare Committee
Louisiana House of Representatives
900 N. 3rd St.
Baton Rouge, LA 70802

The Honorable Christopher Turner
Vice Chair, Louisiana House Health and Welfare Committee
Louisiana House of Representatives
900 N. 3rd St.
Baton Rouge, LA 70802

RE: ATA ACTION SUPPORT FOR HOUSE BILL 624

On behalf of ATA Action, I am writing to express our support for House Bill 624 relating to telehealth.

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 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.

House Bill 624 would serve as a rational expansion of Louisiana's telehealth policy. The proposed legislation would include licensed behavioral health services providers within the definition of "healthcare provider" in the Louisiana Telehealth Access Act.

ATA Action supports the Legislature's efforts to expand Louisiana patients' access to telehealth services by including licensed behavioral health providers among the list of authorized telehealth providers. We are currently in the midst of an unprecedented mental health crisis, so it is essential that state legislatures craft policies which enhance patients' ability to access the behavioral health resources they need. Explicitly authorizing licensed behavioral health providers to deliver telehealth services in the Louisiana Telehealth Access Act will enable these providers to utilize innovative telehealth technologies to access more patients more easily and efficiently than ever before. This will benefit most presciently Louisianans in rural and underserved communities who do not have convenient access to traditional, brick-and-mortar health care offices.

ATA ACTION

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Thank you for your support for telehealth. We urge the Legislature to approve House Bill 624 in the interest of expanding Louisiana patients' access to affordable, high-quality behavioral health care. 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 rectangular background.

Kyle Zebley
Executive Director
ATA Action