



February 2, 2023

The Honorable Wayne MacDonald
Chair, House Committee on Health, Human Services and Elderly Affairs
New Hampshire House of Representatives
Legislative Office Building
33 N State Street Room 205
Concord, NH 03301
HHSEA@leg.state.nh.us

RE: ATA ACTION SUPPORT OF HB 500

Dear Chair MacDonald,

On behalf of ATA Action, I am writing you to express our support of House Bill 500 relating to telehealth prescribing.

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 500 serves as an important expansion of New Hampshire's telehealth policy. The bill would revise the prescribing authority of New Hampshire licensed, out-of-state physicians and advanced practice registered nurses to allow for telehealth prescribing of schedule II through IV controlled substances.

ATA Action supports the Legislature's efforts to expand patient access to prescription medications in a safe manner. Across the United States, patients and consumers are seeking more cost-effective and efficient ways to access the health care they need, and prescriptions are an essential part of this effort. Our organization believes that the choice about a patient's care plan, including the modality utilized to render care, should ultimately be the decision of an empowered patient and their provider, made in accordance with the standard of care. House Bill 500 serves as an excellent example of a policy which enables patients to access their much-needed prescriptions efficiently and safely without sacrificing safeguards intended to prevent substance abuse.

Last session, the legislature expanded the ability of telemedicine prescribers to issue prescriptions for non-opioid and opioid controlled drugs in both the Physicians and Surgeons practice statutes and the New Hampshire Controlled Drug Act (H.B. 503). Unfortunately, the Physicians and Surgeons practice statutes still contain a prohibition on telemedicine prescribing outside of Substance Use Disorder treatment. House Bill 500 corrects this issue as well as expands the prescribing authority of advanced practice registered nurses. These are positive steps for New Hampshire patients.

ATA ACTION

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ATA Action also recognizes that some controlled substances, including those belonging to Schedules I and II, pose a risk of dependency and illegal diversion. As such, we believe that permanent policy should focus on ensuring that patients can utilize telehealth services to receive prescriptions for substances that fall under Federal Schedule III and IV categories, but also some Schedule II substances (stimulants only) under certain circumstances, such as for the treatment of patients with substance use and opioid use disorders (e.g., suboxone, naloxone, buprenorphine). We encourage legislators to review their telehealth prescribing laws and ensure that patients experiencing substance use and mental health disorders can access the full range of services available via telehealth.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. We urge the Committee to support House Bill 500 to expand New Hampshire's access to high-quality, affordable health care and drive better care coordination throughout the state. If you have any questions or would like to discuss the telehealth industry's perspective further, 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 grid background.

Kyle Zebley
Executive Director
ATA Action