



March 21, 2023

The Honorable Marc Berman
Chair, Assembly Business and Professions Committee
California State Assembly
Legislative Office Building
Room 379
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Heath Flora
Vice-Chair, Assembly Business and Professions Committee
California State Assembly
Legislative Office Building
Room 379
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: ATA ACTION SUPPORT OF ASSEMBLY BILL 232

Dear Chair Berman, Vice-Chair Flora and members of the Business and Professions Committee,

On behalf of ATA Action, I am writing you to express our support of Assembly Bill 232 relating to cross state licensure for family therapy, social work, and professional counseling.

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.

As patients and consumers seek out more convenient and affordable ways to access health care, telehealth providers have come to rely on a variety of technological modalities to deliver care. Allowing out-of-state family therapists, social workers, and clinical counseling providers that maintain good standing in their own state, the opportunity to deliver telehealth services in California will help patients maintain continuity of care services when they move to or temporarily reside in California. This important legislation helps to remove arbitrary geographical barriers that would limit access to needed services and ATA Action recommends passing this legislation.

Furthermore, ATA Action believes that patients should be able to receive virtual care from their preferred provider, regardless of that provider's physical location, so long as the practitioners are utilizing the appropriate technology to uphold the established standard of care and can still be held accountable by the appropriate Boards and state agencies should any issues arise from treatment. While we appreciate the additional flexibility provided to therapists, social workers and counselors by AB 232, the legislation still

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limits out-of-state practice to only 30 consecutive days and does not allow the establishment of a practitioner-patient relationship with an out-of-state provider with a patient already living in California. ATA Action recommends that California adopt full cross-state licensure schemes such as the Counseling Compact and the Social Work Licensure Compact, which would provide Californians with greater access to care services while ensuring safety and oversight by appropriate California licensure boards.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. We urge you to pass Assembly Bill 232 in the interest of expanding California patients' access to high-quality, affordable health care. Please do not hesitate to let us know how we can be helpful to your efforts to advance common-sense telehealth policy in California. 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