



May 1, 2023

The Honorable Paul R. Feeney
Chair, Joint Committee on Financial Services
General Court of the Commonwealth of
Massachusetts
24 Beacon St.
Room 112
Boston, MA, 02133

The Honorable James M. Murphy
Chair, Joint Committee on Financial Services
General Court of the Commonwealth of
Massachusetts
24 Beacon St.
Room 254
Boston, MA, 02133

The Honorable Michael O. Moore
Vice Chair, Joint Committee on Financial
Services
General Court of the Commonwealth of
Massachusetts
24 Beacon St.
Room 112
Boston, MA, 02133

The Honorable Bruce J. Ayers
Vice Chair, Joint Committee on Financial
Services
General Court of the Commonwealth of
Massachusetts
24 Beacon St.
Room 112
Boston, MA, 02133

**RE: ATA ACTION COMMENTS REGARDING THE LEGISLATION BEFORE THE
JOINT COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL SERVICES FOR MAY 2**

Dear Chair Freeney, Chair Murphy, Vice Chair Moore, Vice Chair Ayers and members of the Joint
Committee on Financial Services,

On behalf of ATA Action, I am writing you to express our support for pieces of legislation before the
committee at your May 2 hearing.

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.

First, we would like to express our support for Bill H.1073 and Bill S.618. This legislation adds nutrition
counseling to the definition of behavioral health services throughout the Massachusetts General Laws,
ensuring that any patient in need of nutritional counseling can access those services through telehealth.
This is a rational step forward for telehealth care in the commonwealth and will allow nutrition
counseling patients greater and more convenient access to care. We encourage you to consider if there are
other behavioral health or counseling professionals not currently included in the definition of behavioral
health services which could be added in addition to nutrition counselors in order to further expand access
to telehealth care for Massachusetts patients. As far as the rate of reimbursement for telehealth services is
concerned, ATA Action believes that state policymakers should set rational guidelines that are fair to the

ATA ACTION

901 N. Glebe Road, Ste 850 | Arlington, VA 22203
Info@ataaction.org



provider of such services while reflecting the cost savings the effective use of telehealth technologies offers to the health care system.

Additionally, ATA Action is supportive of policy changes found in Bill H.986 and Bill S.655. Ensuring that coverage for telehealth services includes coverage and reimbursement for e-consults and remote patient monitoring services and devices will expand the ability of patients to receive the care they need with less stress regarding the financial implications of care. Expansion of remote patient monitoring coverage and reimbursement will be particularly beneficial for patients in rural and underserved communities who otherwise could face long, inconvenient trips for care by their provider when the same care could be provided from the ease of their home or work. Likewise permitting coverage and reimbursement of e-consults will make it easier for providers to deliver high quality care to their patients, without worrying about causing additional financial stress on the patient that could be incurred by getting a second or specialist opinion.

Finally, ATA Action is also supportive of the provisions present in H.986 and S.655 that expand coverage for telehealth services to include reimbursement for interpreter services for patients with limited English proficiency or those who are deaf or hard of hearing. Limited English proficiency and difficulty hearing can both serve as major barriers to healthcare and this legislation will make it significantly easier for those patients to access telehealth care without incurring additional financial burden from interpreter services. This addition to coverage is especially impactful for patients in these groups as these circumstances can make the provision of healthcare, in-person or via telehealth, exceedingly difficult to find as there could be very few providers who can effectively communicate with these patients without an interpreter.

We strongly encourage the General Court to move forward with this legislation in order expand access to high quality telehealth care for Massachusetts patients. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this legislation. Please let us know if there is anything that we can do to assist you in your efforts to adopt practical telehealth policy in Massachusetts. 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", written in a cursive style.

Kyle Zebley
Executive Director
ATA Action