May 30, 2024

The Honorable Patty Kim  
Chair, Insurance Committee  
Pennsylvania House of Representatives  
38A East Wing  
P.O. Box 202103  
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2103  
RepKim@pahouse.net

The Honorable Tina Picket  
Republican Chair, Insurance Committee  
Pennsylvania House of Representatives  
315A Main Capitol Building  
P.O. Box 202110  
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2110  
tpickett@pahousegop.com

RE: ATA ACTION SUPPORT FOR SENATE BILL 739

Dear Chair Kim, Chair Picket and members of the Insurance Committee,

On behalf of ATA Action, I am writing you to express support for SB 739.

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.

Senate Bill 739 represents a step forward for Pennsylvania’s telemedicine policy. The proposed legislation creates a technology-neutral definition of telemedicine, enabling practitioners to use synchronous modalities, asynchronous technologies, and remote patient monitoring technologies in the delivery of health care services. Additionally, the bill would require health insurance policies to provide coverage for telemedicine delivered by a participating network provider who provides a covered service via telemedicine consistent with the insurer’s medical policies.

ATA Action supports the legislature’s adoption of a technology-neutral definition of telemedicine. The definition aptly captures how telemedicine providers in Pennsylvania and across the country are relying increasingly on robust asynchronous (or store-and-forward) telemedicine technologies in addition to more traditional, synchronous (or real-time) technologies to perform patient evaluations in a variety of fields. Asynchronous technologies are critical to the industry as
they are used to transmit a patient’s health data, vital signs, digital diagnostic images, and other
physiologic data quickly and conveniently. Additionally, the use of asynchronous technologies,
which can be utilized even with lagging bandwidth connections, allows patients who lack access to
reliable internet connections to communicate effectively with their providers from the comfort of
their homes.

Additionally, providers rely increasingly on remote patient monitoring to enhance patient care
outside the hospital or doctor’s office. For example, this technology allows providers to monitor,
collect, and analyze a patient’s physiologic data from any location on a real-time basis, enabling
them to better understand a patient’s response to treatment, track improvements, or be warned sooner
of deteriorations.

Finally, ATA Action also applauds the legislature’s efforts to expand Pennsylvanians’ access to
affordable, high-quality care by requiring health insurance policies to cover telemedicine services
provided by a participating network provider, prohibiting health insurance policies from excluding a
health care service for coverage because the service is provided through telemedicine. This provision
will make it easier for Pennsylvania residents to access quality health care easily and effectively
without having to worry about the potential financial burdens associated with receiving that care. As
far as the rate of reimbursement for telemedicine services is concerned, ATA Action maintains that
state policymakers should set rational guidelines that are both fair to the provider of such services
and reflect the cost savings offered to the health care system by the effective use of telemedicine
technologies.

Thank you for your support for telehealth. We encourage you and your colleagues to support SB 739
in the interest of ensuring easy and efficient access to high-quality telehealth services. Please let us
know if there is anything that we can do to assist you in your efforts to adopt practical telehealth
positions in Pennsylvania. If you have any questions or would like to engage in additional discussion
regarding the telehealth industry’s perspective, please contact me at kzembley@ataaction.org.

Kind regards,

Kyle Zebley
Executive Director
ATA Action