



November 1, 2017

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer  
Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Paul Ryan  
Speaker  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Minority Leader  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Minority Leader Schumer, Speaker Ryan, and Minority Leader Pelosi:

On behalf of the Healthcare Leadership Council (HLC), I am writing to thank you for your work on telehealth and to ask you to include telehealth provisions in upcoming legislation that is moving this year.

HLC is a coalition of chief executives from all disciplines within American healthcare. It is the exclusive forum for the nation's healthcare leaders to jointly develop policies, plans, and programs to achieve their vision of a 21st century health system that makes affordable, high-quality care accessible for all Americans. Members of HLC – hospitals, academic health centers, health plans, pharmaceutical companies, medical device manufacturers, laboratories, biotech firms, health product distributors, pharmacies, post-acute care providers, and information technology companies – advocate for measures to increase the quality and efficiency of healthcare through a patient-centered approach.

Our members have seen firsthand the value of telehealth in making the delivery of healthcare more efficient, effective, and patient-centric. We strongly support the advancement of policies designed to promote and expand telehealth technology. Telehealth can supplement in-person healthcare visits, and has been shown to improve healthcare access and quality while lowering costs. It helps to meet patient demand and delivers care to patients who cannot be seen by a clinician in person.

HLC thanks you for your support and interest in advancing telehealth legislation to date, and respectfully requests the inclusion of the following provisions in any bipartisan must-pass legislative packages.

**CHRONIC Care Act (S. 870) provisions**, passed unanimously by the Senate on September 26, 2017:

- **Medicare Advantage:** Allows Medicare Advantage plans to include estimated costs of telehealth in yearly base bids (Section 5). This provision also passed the House Ways and Means Committee on September 13.
- **Accountable Care Organizations (ACOs):** Lifts 1834(m) restrictions in two-sided risk ACOs (Section 2 of S.1016, the *CONNECT for Health Act*).
- **Home dialysis:** Adds home and dialysis sites as originating sites for home dialysis patients (Section 3). This provision also passed the House under suspension of the rules on July 25.
- **Telestroke:** Lifts restrictions for purposes of evaluation of an acute stroke (Section 4). This provision also passed the House Energy and Commerce Committee on October 4.

**Other *CONNECT for Health Act* provisions, in particular:**

- **Secretarial waiver authority:** Gives the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary direct authority to lift existing restrictions when certain quality and cost-effectiveness criteria are met (Section 11).
- **Rural health clinics and federally qualified health centers:** Allows rural health clinics and federally qualified health centers to serve as originating and distant sites (Section 7).
- **Expanding telemental health:** Secretary may lift restrictions for some mental health services.

Thank you again for your support of telehealth. HLC looks forward to continuing to collaborate with you on this important issue. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Debbie Witchee at (202) 449-3435.

Sincerely,



Mary R. Greal  
President

cc: The Honorable Orrin Hatch  
cc: The Honorable Ron Wyden  
cc: The Honorable Lamar Alexander  
cc: The Honorable Patty Murray  
cc: The Honorable Kevin Brady  
cc: The Honorable Richard Neal  
cc: The Honorable Greg Walden  
cc: The Honorable Frank Pallone, Jr.