

April 9, 2025

The Honorable Brian Schatz

U.S. Senate
722 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington D.C. 20510

The Honorable Roger Wicker

U.S. Senate
555 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mike Thompson

U.S. House of Representatives
231 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable David Schweikert

U.S. House of Representatives
304 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Senators Schatz and Wicker, and Representatives Thompson and Schweikert:

On behalf of the Healthcare Leadership Council (HLC), thank you for reintroducing the Creating Opportunities Now for Necessary and Effective Care Technologies (CONNECT) for Health Act. This legislation is vital to permanently expand and modernize access to telehealth in the Medicare program; we must ensure that the critical progress achieved during the COVID-19 pandemic is not lost.

HLC is an association of CEOs and C-suite executives from all sectors of healthcare working to shape the future of the U.S. healthcare system. HLC is the exclusive forum for the nation's healthcare industry leaders to lead on major, sector-wide issues, generate innovative solutions to unleash private sector ingenuity, and advocate for policies to improve our nation's healthcare delivery system. Members of HLC – hospitals, academic health centers, health plans, pharmaceutical companies, medical device manufacturers, laboratories, biotech firms, health product distributors/wholesalers, post-acute care providers, homecare providers, group purchasing organizations, and information technology companies – advocate for measures to increase the quality and efficiency of healthcare through a patient-centered approach.

The CONNECT for Health Act is the most comprehensive and forward-looking proposal in Congress to remove outdated barriers to telehealth access. By making permanent the telehealth flexibilities granted during the public health emergency, this bill ensures that millions of Americans – particularly those living in rural areas, medically underserved communities, and those with transportation or mobility limitations – will continue to have access to critical healthcare services without unnecessary burdens. Removing barriers to telehealth caused by geographic restrictions, limited provider eligibility, and public health emergencies, is critical to protect access and realize improved value from the timely delivery of care. Importantly, the legislation eliminates antiquated geographic and originating site restrictions that have long hindered the adoption and effectiveness of telehealth. By allowing patients to receive care in their homes and communities, the bill embraces a more modern and equitable approach to healthcare delivery.

Additionally, the CONNECT for Health Act appropriately expands the list of eligible providers who can deliver telehealth services under Medicare, including specialists, therapists, and other vital healthcare professionals. It also eliminates the requirement for in-person visits prior to the

delivery of telemental health services, a crucial step in reducing stigma and increasing access to behavioral healthcare.

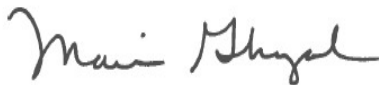
The bill also provides the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services with the flexibility to swiftly respond to future public health emergencies, ensuring that access to telehealth is not delayed in times of crisis. This forward-thinking authority is essential for building a more resilient and responsive healthcare infrastructure.

Beyond protecting access, the bill's permanent expansion of telehealth delivers value by enhancing care coordination, facilitating the management of chronic diseases, and thereby improves overall outcomes. Virtual care has become a fundamental component of healthcare delivery, offering convenience, reducing unnecessary hospital visits, and empowering patients to take a more active role in managing their health. Providing long-term certainty around telehealth policies will encourage greater investment in innovative technologies, care models, and infrastructure which will strengthen the healthcare system's capacity to deliver high-quality, patient-centered care.

Preserving and expanding these benefits through the permanent adoption of telehealth flexibilities is essential to maintaining momentum in healthcare transformation. Without congressional action, these advancements are at risk of expiring on September 30, potentially disrupting access to care for millions of Medicare beneficiaries.

We commend your leadership in advancing this important legislation and urge your colleagues in both chambers to join you in supporting its passage to ensure continued access to high-quality care. If you have any questions or require further information, please do not hesitate to contact [Katie Mahoney](#), Executive Vice President and Chief Policy Officer.

Sincerely,



Maria Ghazal
President & CEO

