



July 31, 2020

The Honorable Kevin Brady  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Ways & Means  
1139 Longworth HOB  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Devin Nunes  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Ways & Means  
Subcommittee on Health  
1139 Longworth HOB  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Ranking Member Brady and Ranking Member Nunes,

The Healthcare Leadership Council (HLC) commends Republican members on the Committee on Ways & Means for their proposal to permanently expand telehealth access to millions of seniors.

The 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 healthcare system that makes affordable high-quality care accessible to all Americans. Members of HLC – hospitals, academic health centers, health plans, pharmaceutical companies, medical device manufacturers, laboratories, biotech firms, health product distributors, post-acute care providers, home care providers, and information technology companies – advocate for measures to increase the quality and efficiency of healthcare through a patient-centered approach. We are uniquely positioned to address disaster preparedness comprehensively from all perspectives in the healthcare industry.

Increased access to telehealth services has become a health priority during the COVID-19 pandemic. As local providers have had to suspend in-person visits, many patients have struggled to receive necessary care or treatment. HLC members appreciate the waivers granted by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to allow broader access to telehealth services during the pandemic. Traditionally, however, providers have been limited by policy and legal barriers that limit the provision of these services. HLC appreciates your work to make many of these provisions permanent.

The removal of geographic and originating site restrictions for Medicare beneficiaries to access telehealth services is a significant step to improve telehealth use, as it removes unnecessary barriers that prevent beneficiaries from receiving virtual care regardless of their community status. HLC also supports removing the restrictions on Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) and Rural Health Clinics (RHCs) providing telehealth services. Many of the areas served by these entities already suffer from a lack of medical resources and expanding telehealth services in these communities will allow traditionally underserved populations to receive necessary care.

HLC appreciates your recognition of the importance of providing a reimbursement framework for audio-only telehealth services. While video appointments provide more ideal circumstances for telehealth visits, these services are constrained by existing limitations on broadband in rural communities as well as an inability for many beneficiaries to access the necessary technology. While we encourage Congress to examine the possibility of expanding broadband access to these communities, we support proposals to provide reimbursement for both audio-only and video telehealth appointments.

HLC also supports recognizing the importance of non-physician clinical practitioners in creating a sustainable telehealth model. Allowing the Secretary of Health and Human Services to grant waivers that permit additional practitioners to bill Medicare for telehealth services will give patients greater access to a variety of important services via virtual platforms. Expanding this flexibility to permit patients to receive more home health services with telehealth platforms will increase access to important chronic care treatments and result in better patient outcomes.

HLC looks forward to working with your staff in creating a sustainable telehealth system that allows millions of Medicare beneficiaries to receive high quality health care services. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Tina Grande at [tgrande@hlc.org](mailto:tgrande@hlc.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mary R. Grealy". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Mary" and last name "Grealy" clearly legible.

Mary R. Grealy  
President