

April 2021

Senator Brian Schatz
United States Senator
722 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Re: Support for the CONNECT for Health Act of 2021

Dear Senator Schatz:

On behalf of agilon health and our partner physician practices, we write to thank you for your continued support to expand access for telehealth services and offer our support for your legislation, the Creating Opportunities Now for Necessary and Effective Care Technologies (CONNECT) for Health Act of 2021. Telehealth services transformed care delivery in the U.S. during the COVID-19 pandemic. Now, expanding telehealth services beyond the pandemic will ensure independent physician practices can continue to provide accessible, high quality, coordinated care.

agilon health partners with independent physician practices to define a new standard of quality, efficiency, and patient experience. agilon health coordinates with these practices to support the transition to two-sided risk contracting in traditional Medicare and Medicare Advantage. We bring the people, solutions, and technology necessary to support long-term success in implementing outcomes-based payment models and restores the joy of practicing medicine. We work with physician practices across the nation, serving 1,500 primary care physicians caring for more than 150,000 patients.

Your legislation, which eliminates geographic restrictions and expands permissible originating sites to include the home under section 1834(m) of the Social Security Act, will ensure Medicare beneficiaries are able to receive critical telehealth services regardless of geographic location. During the pandemic, all patients were able to receive telehealth services preventing the spread of COVID-19, protecting patients and providers alike. Permitting clinicians to furnish telehealth services while patients were located in the home provided a unique opportunity for providers to observe patients in their homes, assessing how potential environmental factors contribute to a certain condition. We strongly support adding the home as a permissible originating site. Eliminating geographic restrictions will grant all beneficiaries access to high quality, telehealth services, rather than returning to restrictive pre-pandemic rules that constrain access.

The federal government, states, providers and plans have invested significant time and capital into developing and deploying telehealth technology and virtual visits. Patients have responded positively to this mode of care delivery. In a recent survey implemented by Central Ohio Primary Care, over 89% of patients indicated that they were highly satisfied with the quality of care they received via their telehealth visit. In addition, 67% of patients indicated that the telehealth visit was just as good as a face-to-face visit. Similarly, PriMED surveyed its patients, and over 88% were very satisfied with the quality of their telehealth visit. Furthermore, over two-thirds of those surveyed indicated they are very likely to request a telehealth visit as part of their patient care experience in the future. We are experiencing high levels of both patient and physician satisfaction with telehealth across all of our partner practices.

Thank you for your continued engagement and support to expand telehealth services to reach all Medicare beneficiaries. We look forward to continuing our work with you to ensure this critical tool in healthcare delivery continues beyond the pandemic.

Sincerely,

Steven Sell
Chief Executive Officer
agilon health