



February 28, 2020

The Hon. Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Hon. Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Hon. Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Hon. Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Hon. Richard Shelby
Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

The Hon. Nita Lowey
Chairwoman
House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

The Hon. Patrick Leahy
Vice Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

The Hon. Kay Granger
Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Minority Leader Schumer, Speaker Pelosi, Minority Leader McCarthy, and Congressional Leaders:

We write to ask for your support in expanding access to vital telehealth services in the COVID-19 supplemental appropriation and urge you to include a provision that would provide the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) with the authority to waive existing Medicare restrictions on telehealth visits during a public health emergency.

Access to care is an essential barrier to addressing public health crises, and telehealth can play a critical role by offering a safe and cost-effective means of identifying and responding to public health needs. Many telehealth providers are already playing a key role in combating this public health emergency, enabling the timely and effective treatment of patients in quarantine and at home with telehealth and virtual care technologies. Telehealth can improve access to care, speed diagnosis and treatment, and limit the risk of person-to-person spread of the virus. We are inspired by the response of many in the telehealth community and remain committed to working

with HHS and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to stem the growing public concern and combat the spread of COVID-19.

However, we believe Congress should provide the administration with as many tools as possible, including the ability to waive Medicare restrictions on telehealth to give health care professionals the support they need to effectively meet the urgent health needs of their communities. The telehealth restrictions currently in place for Medicare run the risk of slowing access to care for seniors in this critical time.

To address these barriers, we urge you to consider Sec. 9 of *the CONNECT for Health Act of 2019* (S. 2741/H.R. 4932) in the upcoming COVID-19 supplemental legislation, which would empower the Secretary of Health and Human Services to waive telehealth restrictions for Medicare beneficiaries during national emergencies. This provision would give the health care professionals we rely on the support they need to fully address this public health emergency and ensure we are leveraging all available resources to provide safe and efficient care to those in need.

Sincerely,

The American Telemedicine Association (ATA)
eHealth Initiative
Health Innovation Alliance
Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society (HIMSS)
Personal Connected Health Alliance (PCHAlliance)