

August 18, 2022

The Honorable Liz Cheney
416 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Debbie Dingell
116 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Cheney and Representative Dingell,

On behalf of the undersigned organizations representing consumers, family members, mental health and addiction providers, advocates and other stakeholders committed to retaining telehealth flexibilities for Americans, we want to express our appreciation for your leadership of the *Advancing Telehealth Beyond COVID-19 Act of 2021* ([H.R. 4040](#)) and congratulate you on the legislation's subsequent passage out of the U.S. House of Representatives last month.

As individuals and families across the nation face unprecedented behavioral health needs, timely and safe access to mental health and substance use disorder services are critical. This legislation will extend several telehealth flexibilities through 2024, which will provide continuity of care and stability for individuals and families during this difficult time. Specifically, the bill extends the removal of geographic and originating site requirements, expands the list of telehealth-eligible providers, delays the in-person visit requirement for mental health service delivery, and continues audio-only services as a covered telehealth modality.

Telehealth use among Medicare beneficiaries has risen astronomically since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic as visits conducted through telehealth increased 63-fold in 2020 alone.¹ Telehealth has also served as a bridge for patients to continue accessing behavioral health care or potentially has increased the comfort level to seek this type of care from their own home a third of Medicare visits via telehealth were with behavioral health specialists, compared to 8% with primary care providers and 3% with other specialists.²

We will be advocating heavily to ensure this legislation is advanced in the U.S. Senate by the end of year. Thank you again for your leadership and commitment to ensuring Americans can continue to receive behavioral health care services.

Sincerely,

2020 Mom

ACTNow for Mental Health

American Academy of Social Work and Social Welfare

American Association for Psychoanalysis in Clinical Social Work

American Association on Health and Disability

American Counseling Association

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention

¹ Samson W, Tarazi W, Turrini G, Sheingold, S. (December 3, 2021). Medicare Beneficiaries' Use of Telehealth in 2020: Trends by Beneficiary Characteristics and Location. ASPE. Retrieved from <https://aspe.hhs.gov/reports/medicare-beneficiaries-use-telehealth-2020>

² *Ibid.*

American Group Psychotherapy Association
American Mental Health Counselors Association
American Psychiatric Association
American Psychiatric Nurses Association
American Psychological Association
Anxiety and Depression Association of America
Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness
Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder
Eating Disorders Coalition for Research, Policy & Action
Global Alliance for Behavioral Health and Social Justice
International OCD Foundation
The Jewish Federations of North America
Lakeshore Foundation
Maternal Mental Health Leadership Alliance
NAADAC, the Association for Addiction Professionals
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Association of Social Workers
National Eating Disorders Association
National League for Nursing
National Network of Depression Centers
REDC
RI International
The Kennedy Forum