



Committee: Senate
Bill Number: SB 502
Title: Health Insurance – Telehealth – Delivery of Mental Health Services – Coverage for Home Settings
Hearing Date: February 19, 2020
Position: Support

The Maryland Nurses Association (MNA) supports *Senate Bill 502 – Health Insurance – Telehealth – Delivery of Mental Health Services – Coverage*. The focus of the bill is to expand Medicaid coverage for health care services delivered through telehealth in the patient’s home. The bill focuses on reimbursement for mental health.

MNA supports the expansion of telehealth reimbursement as an innovative method of improving health outcomes. Under our Total Cost of Care Model in Maryland, it is critical that health care providers be able to utilize telehealth to communicate efficiently and effectively with patients. According to the American Hospital Association Center for Health Innovationⁱ:

“Telehealth and digital health care enable a model of care that is ubiquitous and seamless, more affordable and integrated into patients’ lives. In the shift to demand-driven health care, telehealth becomes the patient’s first — and most frequent — point of access for urgent care, triage for emergent conditions, specialty consults, post-discharge management, medication education, behavioral health counseling, chronic care management and more.”

Given Maryland’s urgent need to address shortages in behavioral health professionals, particularly in rural areas, we think it is strategic to focus on expanding options through behavioral health. Maryland’s Medicaid Program currently limits reimbursement to when both the patient and clinician are in an approved clinical setting. This model does not reflect many models of telehealth where services are delivered in the home.

We ask for a favorable report on this legislation. If we can provide additional perspective on telehealth, please contact Robyn Elliott at relliott@policypartners.net or (443) 926-3443.

ⁱ The American Hospital Association Center for Health Innovation. “Telehealth: A Path to Virtual Integrated Care”. February 2019. https://www.aha.org/system/files/media/file/2019/02/MarketInsights_TeleHealthReport.pdf