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February 10, 2020

The Honorable Shane Pendergrass, Chair
The Honorable Joseline Pena-Melnyk, Vice Chair
House Health and Government Operations Committee
Maryland General Assembly
Annapolis, Maryland

The Honorable Paul Pinsky, Chair
The Honorable Cheryl Kagan, Vice Chair
Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
Maryland General Assembly
Annapolis, Maryland

Re: Support for telehealth bills (HB 448 and SB 402)

Dear Chairs, Vice Chairs and Members of the Committees:

Allergy & Asthma Network is pleased to see Maryland policymakers taking up the important issue of telehealth in House Bill 448 (Rosenburg) and Senate Bill 402 (Kagan and Lam) and supports the bill's telehealth provisions, which will enable Maryland residents to secure high-quality care through the use of modern technologies. Our organization is a national nonprofit dedicated to protecting and improving the health of people with asthma, allergies and related conditions, and we believe progressive policies regarding telehealth are essential to fulfilling that goal.

The bills' telehealth provisions properly balance access and safety issues to strengthen the healthcare system for Maryland patients. Physicians who use telehealth to deliver care should be held to the same standards as they would be if they were treating a patient in an office. Many patients who suffer from allergies, especially those with allergy-related skin conditions, would benefit from greater and more convenient access to a physician.

We believe telehealth functions as a complement to existing healthcare resources by increasing access to affordable medical treatment. The delivery system uses technology that is pervasive in modern daily life, and it can provide a valuable – and cost-effective – way for people to get necessary treatment. Allergic reactions and related conditions can occur at any time, and patients should have the option to pursue treatment through telehealth rather than traveling to a hospital's emergency room in the middle of the night.

We appreciate your consideration, and we hope to see telehealth policies in HB 448 and SB 402 become law.

Sincerely,

Tonya A. Winders

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President and CEO