



MARYLAND ACADEMY OF FAMILY PHYSICIANS

ABLE, RESPONSIVE FAMILY PHYSICIANS SERVING THEIR COMMUNITIES

TO: The Honorable Shane E. Pendergrass, Chair
Members, House Health and Government Operations Committee
Honorable Samuel I. Rosenberg

FROM: MD Academy of Family Physicians, Mozella Williams, M.D., President

DATE: February 18, 2020

RE: **OPPOSE** – House Bill 448 – *Health Care Practitioners – Telehealth*

On behalf of the Maryland Academy of Family Physicians (“Academy”), I am writing in opposition to House Bill 448—Health Care Practitioners--Telehealth. The Academy is the largest professional medical specialty society in Maryland, with over 1,200 members who are practicing family physicians, family physicians in training and medical students. The Academy requests your opposition to this legislation for the reasons set forth below.

HB 448 allows for a provider to utilize “asynchronous” telehealth. Regulations adopted by the Board of Physicians in 2019 broadly allow the use of telehealth but limit the use of asynchronous methods to interpretive services such as reading and analyzing images, and subsequent interactions with a physician. In the view of the Academy, the regulations properly require that a synchronous patient evaluation occur before providing treatment of prescribing medication.

Telehealth holds promise for the future and offers the benefits of access and convenience to patients. However, it also holds perils in that there is no substitute for a physician or other provider seeing a patient with her own eyes and using the information that visual provides to inform the diagnosis and treatment.

For these reasons, the Academy requests that the Committee oppose HB 448 and allow the existing regulations adopted by the Board in 2019 to remain in effect.