



Larry Hogan, Governor · Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor · Dennis R. Schrader, Acting Secretary

February 16, 2021

The Honorable Paul G. Pinsky
Chair, Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
2 West
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

RE: Senate Bill 568 - Health Care Practitioners - Telehealth - Out-of-State Health Care Practitioners - Letter of Support

Dear Chair Pinsky and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) respectfully submits this letter of support for Senate Bill 568 (SB 568), Health Care Practitioners - Telehealth - Out-of-State Health Care Practitioners. This bill would expand the number of health care practitioners who can provide telehealth services in Maryland by allowing out-of-state health care practitioners, who meet certain criteria, to provide health care services to Marylanders as an exception to licensure.

By allowing more providers to provide telehealth services to Marylanders, this bill would increase access to necessary health care services. This increased access would not be dependent on where a person lived or where they traditionally received care. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the use of telehealth services has increased dramatically, as people have increasingly turned to telehealth as a manner to receive care in their home.¹ The amount of telehealth interactions that can take place is contingent on the number of health care practitioners who can deliver these services. In 2019, the BHA Workforce Survey showed a dearth of behavioral health providers available to provide all types of services. Before the State of Emergency, service provision occurred mostly through face-to-face and limited HIPAA compliant telehealth format limiting access to behavioral health services.

¹ Data collected between mid-March and mid-October 2020 by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services indicates over 24.5 million beneficiaries have received a Medicare telehealth service as compared to around 15,000 beneficiaries per week prior to the PHE.

The expansion of the provider pool that any Marylander can access will increase the number of appointments available to a person and will decrease the wait time for a person to receive care. Accordingly, this will expand access to all types of necessary care, including mental and behavioral services.

MDH respectfully requests a favorable report on SB 568 so that all Marylanders can access the care they need in the most convenient and effective manner for them.

I hope this information is useful. If you would like to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact me at webster.ye@maryland.gov / (410) 260-3190 or Heather Shek, Deputy Director of Governmental Affairs at heather.shek@maryland.gov or at the same phone number.

Sincerely,



Webster Ye
Assistant Secretary, Health Policy