



Maryland
Hospital Association

February 10, 2022

To: The Honorable Shane E. Pendergrass, Chair, House Health & Government Operations Committee

Re: Letter of Support – House Bill 670 – Maryland Health Care Commission – Study on Expansion of Interstate Telehealth

Dear Chair Pendergrass:

On behalf of the Maryland Hospital Association's (MHA) 60 member hospitals and health systems, we appreciate the opportunity to comment on House Bill 670. COVID-19 led many Marylanders to stay home to stop the spread. To help maintain access to care, hospitals and doctors rushed to embrace the long-available but underused tool of telehealth—delivering health care remotely to keep both patients and providers safe. Emergency federal and state waivers freed hospitals and health systems to ramp up telehealth quickly. Telehealth visits at one Maryland health system skyrocketed from eight patients a day to more than 1,200 during the public health crisis.

Telehealth services are universally supported by patients and by hospital caregivers. Beyond times of crisis telehealth broadens access to care, improves patient outcomes and satisfaction, and helps chip away at health inequities.

A key benefit of COVID-19 telehealth waivers was interstate telehealth visits between Marylanders and our bordering states. Patients and their families seek care across state lines for many reasons—they need specialists, there are no providers available in their area, or convenience. Telehealth accelerates this trend. Unfortunately, state licensure requirements have not kept pace with technology that allows patients to access experts beyond their own communities.

This legislation provides a path to study and recommend solutions to the administrative burden caused by states' varying licensure requirements, and we applaud the sponsors for including this issue in the study.

For these reasons, we urge a *favorable* review of HB 670.

For more information, please contact:
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