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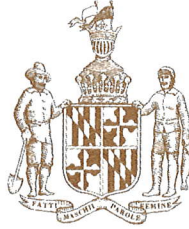
Chair, Finance Committee

Executive Nominations Committee

Joint Committee on Gaming Oversight

Joint Committee on Management
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Spending Affordability Committee



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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

February 5, 2025

SB372

Preserve Telehealth Access Act of 2025

Good afternoon, Vice Chair Hayes and Members of the Finance Committee;

Thank you for the opportunity to present SB 372, the Preserve Telehealth Access Act of 2025. SB 372 repeals the sunset on audio-only telephone conversations being included in the definition of “telehealth,” for improved accessibility of telehealth services in the state.

This bill permanently includes audio-only telephone conversations as part of the definition of “telehealth,” which will enshrine this committee’s previous inclusion of audio-only telephone calls and prior renewal of that inclusion as law. Audio-only telephone conversations have been considered part of the state definition of “telehealth” since 2021, and that consideration was renewed and extended to June of this year during the 2023 legislative session.

Including audio-only telephone conversations in the definition of “telehealth” will preserve and expand access to vital mental health care for many individuals in Maryland, along with insurance coverage. Audio-only telephone calls are an accessible solution for patients who cannot receive in-person care, such as incarcerated persons, the elderly, disabled or impaired patients, and individuals who live in care deserts where options for treatment are limited. In addition to being a private and convenient option for care, audio-only telephone calls make telehealth services available to patients who face technology or connectivity barriers.

Continuing to consider audio-only telephone conversations as a part of telehealth care will also expand insurance language to include audio-only options in their coverage for mental health. Making this definition permanent is the right step to take towards prioritizing mental health outcomes in Maryland and preserving the accessibility of mental health care for everyone who needs it.

I respectfully request a “Favorable Report” on SB 372.