

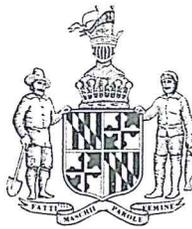
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Finance Committee

Executive Nominations Committee



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*The Senate of Maryland*  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

February 18, 2020

The Honorable Delores G. Kelley  
Finance Committee

Senate Bill 502- Telehealth – Delivery of Mental Health Services – Coverage for Home Settings

Dear Madam Chair and Members of the Committee:

During the 2016 Legislative Session, this Committee passed Senate Bill 707, Workgroup on Rural Health Delivery, and one of the recommendations of that workgroup was to expand the use of telemedicine. Senate Bill 502 allows the expansion of telemedicine to support mental health services provided in the home setting.

Traveling long distances to access mental health care is a familiar problem in rural areas where a quarter of all Marylanders live. According to the Maryland Health Care Commission, in this State there are 29 acute care hospitals that provide inpatient psychiatric services for those age 18 and older. Of those 29 hospitals, only five provide care for adolescents between the ages of 13 and 17 and only 2 hospitals provide care for children younger than 12. Additionally, these acute care hospitals which provide immediate short term care, are only in Baltimore and Baltimore City, Calvert, Carroll and Montgomery counties - which can be hours away from immediate family or parents.

Medicaid currently provides coverage for mental health services via telehealth but not to a patient in the patient's home. Senate Bill 502 will extend these services to Medicaid, Private Insurance, Medicare and Veterans Administrative Coverage.

I request the committee's favorable consideration of Senate Bill 502.