



Committee: House Health and Government Operations Committee
Bill Number: House Bill 1208
Title: Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Telehealth – Pilot Program
Hearing Date: March 4, 2020
Position: Support

The Maryland Nurses Association (MNA) supports *House Bill 1208 – Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Telehealth – Pilot Program*. The focus of the bill is to study chronic condition case management and behavioral health services through telehealth where the recipient is not required to be in a secondary health care location.

MNA supports the expansion of telehealth reimbursement as an innovative method of improving health outcomes. Under our Total Cost of Care Model in Maryland, it is critical that health care providers be able to utilize telehealth to communicate efficiently and effectively with patients. According to the American Hospital Association Center for Health Innovation¹:

“Telehealth and digital health care enable a model of care that is ubiquitous and seamless, more affordable and integrated into patients’ lives. In the shift to demand-driven health care, telehealth becomes the patient’s first — and most frequent — point of access for urgent care, triage for emergent conditions, specialty consults, post-discharge management, medication education, behavioral health counseling, chronic care management and more.”

Given Maryland’s urgent need to address shortages in behavioral health professionals, particularly in rural areas, we think it is strategic to focus on expanding options through behavioral health. Maryland’s Medicaid Program currently limits reimbursement to when both the patient and clinician are in an approved clinical setting. This model does not reflect many models of telehealth where services are delivered in the home or other natural setting for the patient.

We ask for a favorable report on this legislation. If we can provide additional perspective on telehealth, please contact Robyn Elliott at relliott@policypartners.net or (443) 926-3443.

¹ The American Hospital Association Center for Health Innovation. “Telehealth: A Path to Virtual Integrated Care”. February 2019. https://www.aha.org/system/files/media/file/2019/02/MarketInsights_TeleHealthReport.pdf