



DATE: March 4, 2020 **COMMITTEE:** House Health and Government Operations
BILL NO: House Bill 1208
BILL TITLE: Maryland Medical Assistance Program - Telehealth - Pilot Program
POSITION: Support

Kennedy Krieger Institute supports House Bill 1208 - Maryland Medical Assistance Program - Telehealth - Pilot Program.

Bill Summary:

Senate Bill 502 establishes a Maryland Medicaid Mental Health Telehealth pilot that allows for reimbursement for patients in a home setting.

Background:

Kennedy Krieger Institute is dedicated to improving the lives of children and young adults with developmental, behavioral, cognitive and physical challenges. Kennedy Krieger's services include inpatient, outpatient, school-based and community-based programs.

Medicaid Services: Kennedy Krieger serves approximately 25,000 families per year, of whom a third are Medicaid recipients.

Telehealth Services: Kennedy Krieger Telehealth services include education, consultation, diagnosis, and direct in-home treatments. The in-home services are most directly relevant to this Senate Bill and currently include behavioral assessment and intervention for a range of behavior problems, skill deficits, and relationship problems secondary to a variety of diagnoses such as ADHD, autism, anxiety, depression, and adjustment disorder for ages ranging from toddlers to young adults. Families connect with their therapist through a secure, HIPAA-compliant web-based portal from the privacy of their homes. Necessary equipment includes WiFi service and a telephone, tablet, laptop or desktop with a built-in or USB camera.

Rationale:

In-home telehealth services are feasible, efficient, and effective, and they allow families across the state access to the highest quality of services and providers available. The primary purpose is to: (a) provide services to Maryland families having no access to quality care; and (b) lower the cost associated with the continued lack of proper treatment. The quality of care is directly related to the ability to be reimbursed, which is an important consideration for telehealth.

Telehealth increases access to care, makes services more accessible for families, and reduces travel time and expenses. Therapists are able to see the child and family in the home setting, where the majority of the problems occur. Sessions can be scheduled at the convenience of the families, rather than clinic hours.

Evidence-Based Outcomes To Date (based on over 600 Telehealth sessions): Decreases in problem behaviors and increases in adaptive skills for telehealth cases are comparable to results for clinic-based cases, whereas no treatment wait-groups show no improvement or worsening of status. Similarly, decreases in parenting stress and depression are comparable for telehealth and clinic-based services. In addition, parents report therapeutic rapport to be as strong with telehealth services as with clinic-based services.

Kennedy Krieger Institute requests a favorable report on House Bill 1208.