



Board of Nursing

Larry Hogan, Governor · Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor · Dennis R. Schrader, Acting Secretary

February 17, 2021

The Honorable Delores G. Kelley
Chair, Finance Committee
3 East Miller Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

RE: SB 567 – Telehealth Services – Expansion – Letter of Support

Dear Chair Kelley:

The Maryland Board of Nursing (“the Board”) respectfully submits this letter of support for SB 567 – Telehealth Services – Expansion. This bill alters the health care services the Maryland Medical Assistant Program is required to provide through telehealth. This bill requires the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) to apply to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) for an amendment to any of the State’s waivers to implement certain requirements. Additionally, this bill changes the definition of telehealth to include synchronous or asynchronous interactions, audio-only conversations, and remote patient monitoring services.

The Board feels that this bill has substantial value at promoting access to care, particularly during this time of COVID, but also for the already underserved rural communities. By expanding telehealth capabilities to include audio-only services, health care practitioners have a wider reach to engage and treat individuals. Additionally, the use of audio-only telehealth has been prominent in the behavioral health field, and has been found to benefit both the practitioners and patients. The bill establishes the standard for practice of telehealth and proactively addresses patient safety concerns by requiring that a health care practitioner providing telehealth services be held to the same standards of practice that are applicable to inpatient settings.

This bill aligns with Maryland’s Nurse Licensure Compact which allows nurses the privilege to practice in other compact states through telehealth. Currently, these nurses which include nurse practitioners, can practice in a compact state and are required to practice according to the statutes and regulations governing nursing practice in that state.

For the reasons discussed above, the Board of Nursing respectfully submits this letter of support for SB 567.

I hope this information is useful. For more information, please contact Iman Farid, Health Policy Analyst, at (410) 585 – 1536 (iman.farid@maryland.gov) or Rhonda Scott, Deputy Director, at (410) 585 – 1953 (rhonda.scott2@maryland.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "G. Hicks", written in a cursive style.

Gary N. Hicks
Board President

The opinion of the Board expressed in this document does not necessarily reflect that of the Department of Health or the Administration.