

Senator Delores G. Kelley, Chair
Senate Finance Committee
3 East, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401



The Maryland
Acupuncture
Society, Inc.

February 17, 2021

Re: SB 567 – FAVORABLE – Telehealth Services – Expansion

Dear Chairman Kelley and Members of the Senate Finance Committee:

Please accept this letter on behalf of the Maryland Acupuncture Society (“MAS”) as our support of Senate Bill 567 – Telehealth Services – Expansion. MAS represents over 1,000 licensed practitioners throughout the State of Maryland and we are in strong support of this bill.

At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the Maryland General Assembly passed emergency legislation that expanded telehealth services to assist in combating spread of the virus. HB 731 expands telehealth services to include audio only appointments and remote patient monitoring services, as well as codifying that telehealth services are covered on the same basis and at the same rate as in person visits.

Acupuncturists, like all healthcare practitioners, are dedicated to the health and safety of our patients, and one way we do this is by ensuring that we give them a multitude of options for accessing care. While we recognize that traditional acupuncture needling is not available during telehealth appointments, there are many other treatments offered through telehealth. These include health and wellness coaching, emotional treatment of the body, dietary therapy, movement therapy in the form of qi gong, as well as directing our patients to massage along different meridians and certain acupressure points.

Last year, our members and their patients found telehealth appointments to be very beneficial. Expanding access to care is important, especially during these stressful times, and this bill would ensure that telehealth services are treated no differently than in-person services. Furthermore, expanding coverage to include audio only appointments is very important. Not every patient has access to the internet or a smart phone.

For the reasons stated above, we **SUPPORT** SB 567. Thank you for your consideration of this important piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

Denise Tyson
President
Maryland Acupuncture Society