



THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

BILL: House Bill 123 - Preserve Telehealth Access Act of 2021

SPONSOR: Delegate Pena-Melnyk, *et al.*

HEARING DATE: January 27, 2021

COMMITTEE: Health and Government Operations

CONTACT: Intergovernmental Affairs Office, 301-780-8411

POSITION: SUPPORT

The Office of the Prince George's County Executive **SUPPORTS House Bill 123 - Preserve Telehealth Access Act of 2021** which expands telehealth to include audio-only calls for Medicaid and private insurers and to include remote patient monitoring services for Medicaid. The bill also removes originating and distant site restrictions on telehealth for Medicaid (allowing patients to receive telehealth services at their home) and requires private insurers to provide the reimburse to healthcare providers for a covered service regardless of whether it was provided via telehealth or in person. Finally, the bill prohibits private insurers from requiring as a condition of reimbursement for a telehealth service that the service be provided by a provided designated by the private insurer.

The expansion in telehealth in response to the COVID-19 public health emergency has been critical in ensuring access to health care to our most vulnerable populations. Temporary emergency expansions of telehealth covering audio-only calls is vital for reaching older patients who don't have a smartphone, and removing location restrictions allows patients to receive based on where it is safest and easiest for them to reach. It is important that we continue that momentum that has appeared for telehealth in the past year and make permanent the temporary expansions of telehealth set to expire once the COVID-19 public health emergency subsides.

For these reasons, the Office of the Prince George's County Executive **SUPPORTS House Bill 123** and asks for a **FAVORABLE** report.