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Baltimore, MD 21207

**TO:** The Honorable Shane Pendergrass  
Chairwoman, Health and Government Operations Committee

**FROM:** LeadingAge Maryland

**SUBJECT:** House Bill 123, Preserve Telehealth Access Act of 2021

**DATE:** January 27, 2021

**POSITION:** **Favorable**

LeadingAge Maryland supports House Bill 123, Preserve Telehealth Access Act of 2021.

LeadingAge Maryland is a community of not-for-profit aging services organizations serving residents and clients through continuing care retirement communities, affordable senior housing, assisted living, nursing homes and home and community-based services. We represent more than 120 not-for-profit organizations, including the vast majority of CCRCs in Maryland. Our mission is to expand the world of possibilities for aging in Maryland. We partner with consumers, caregivers, researchers, faith communities and others who care about aging in Maryland.

Under House Bill 123, the Maryland Medical Assistance Program must provide health care services appropriately delivered through telehealth to program recipients regardless of the location of the program recipient at the time telehealth services are provided. Telehealth” includes an audio-only conversation between a health care provider and a patient using telecommunications technology. The Maryland Department of Health would be required to apply to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services for an amendment to any of the state’s § 1115 waivers necessary to implement the requirements of this section.

Using telehealth has allowed for greater flexibility with regard to outreach. As patients move through different continuums of care (skilled nursing homes to home as an example), access to technology may vary, yet treatment continues. Allowing for non-video aspects is helpful. Many older Marylanders living in affordable senior housing communities still have barriers to accessing affordable internet. Allowing greater access to health care through their phone will provide more opportunities for needed treatment, follow up, and continuity of care. With COVID in mind, it allows for safe treatment and for treatment when transportation is a

concern (again, especially given COVID and older adults not wanting to use public transportation). Treatment should be offered in all communication/connection formats.

For these reasons, LeadingAge Maryland respectfully requests a favorable report for House Bill 123.

For additional information, please contact Aaron J. Greenfield, 410.446.1992