



**2021 SESSION  
POSITION PAPER**

**BILL:** House Bill 731 – Telehealth Services - Expansion

**COMMITTEE:** House Health and Governmental Operations Committee

**POSITION:** Letter of Support

**BILL ANALYSIS:** House Bill (HB) 731 would change the health care services the Maryland Medical Assistance Program is required to provide via telehealth, the circumstances under which telehealth services are provided using telehealth methods, require through changes in law certain insurers, non-profit health service plans and health maintenance organizations reimburse for those services and within certain timeframes, and other related enhancements to the provision of telehealth services.

**POSITION RATIONALE:** The Maryland Association of County Health Officers (MACHO) supports HB 731 as a cost-efficient way to expand access to care for individuals in Maryland communities and a valuable tool to increase access to residents in rural areas and decrease health disparities in communities. The following are the benefits for telehealth services:

- Convenient for patients
- Quicker access to care provider
- Eliminates travel time and money
- Patients in rural areas have fast and easy access particularly to specialty care
- Providers can significantly expand potential patient base
- No shows decrease
- Readmissions decrease as remote consults help manage conditions.
- Healthcare facility cost decrease because online visits are less expensive than urgent care and Emergency care
- Insurance companies can reduce costs.

Telehealth efforts have enabled Maryland residents to seek care and to maintain current care plans throughout the current pandemic emergency, freeing up practice and hospital space for those critical COVID-19 patients and helping to reduce the transmission of the virus. It is critical that further enhancements to the way telehealth is delivered continue for providers to be able to effectively and efficiently deliver this method of care.

For these reasons, the Maryland Association of County Health Officers submits this letter of support for HB 731. For more information, please contact Ruth Maiorana, MACHO Executive Director at [rmaiora1@jhu.edu](mailto:rmaiora1@jhu.edu) or 410-937-1433. *This communication reflects the position of MACHO.*