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January 27, 2021

To: The Health and Government Operations Committee
From: Adventist HealthCare
Re: HB123 – The Preserve Telehealth Access Act of 2021

POSITION: SUPPORT

By removing key barriers to telehealth access HB123 broadens access to care in general, improves patient outcomes and satisfaction, and chips away at long-standing health inequities.

The COVID19 pandemic accelerated the use of telemedicine in ways that appeared impossible before. It has created a level of comfort with the format and better understanding of the value that telemedicine brings. Patient satisfaction has soared, particularly in the area of behavioral health. By providing access to the right level of care at the right time, telemedicine will help make our communities healthier, avoiding unnecessary complications due to delayed treatment.

Adventist Medical Group saw a 90% increase in telehealth visits during the pandemic and has experienced significant benefits, including:

- Improved safety for patients and providers by reducing exposure to infectious diseases,
- Improved patient satisfaction,
- Improved access to care, especially for patients in remote locations,
- Drastically reduced “no show” rates – especially for psychiatric appointments,
- Addresses some social determinants of health like – like transportation,
- Reduces readmissions by facilitating physician/patient contact when first needed,
- Allows for better management of chronic conditions.

HB123 would permanently establish four key expansions of telehealth services that were granted during the pandemic. Easing restrictions on where a telehealth visit can take place, allowing for reimbursement parity between telehealth and in-person visits, allowing for audio only visits, and removing barriers to remote patient monitoring services are all critical to achieving the maximum benefits of telehealth.

The proof is in the pudding, telehealth works! Patients and providers love it, access is expanded, and outcomes are improved.

For these reasons Adventist HealthCare supports HB123 and encourages the committee to give a **favorable report**.

