



January 25, 2021

The Honorable Chair Shane E. Pendergrass and Vice-Chair Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk  
Maryland House Health & Government Operations Committee  
House Bill 123-SB3 – Preserve Telehealth Access Act of 2021  
Position: Support

Dear Chair Pendergrass and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of ChristianaCare, I write to express our support for HB123-SB3, the *Preserve Telehealth Access Act of 2021*. This legislation is essential to ensuring that our patients and neighbors – especially in rural and underserved areas of Maryland – have access to innovative, effective, equitable, and affordable systems of care.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, ChristianaCare expanded and scaled our comprehensive virtual provider visit and interactive telehealth program. These telehealth opportunities have allowed patients to receive necessary care in their home, thereby reducing community transmission, while still providing necessary care to vulnerable populations.

In these particularly challenging times, patients benefit from consistency and continuity in their health care. As COVID-19 reorients our relationship with our neighbors, telemedicine has played a larger role in the care we provide and has quickly become an important touchstone for our patients. This is especially true for our most vulnerable patients, including the elderly, those with disabilities, and those in underserved communities. Through collaboration and innovation, ChristianaCare remains focused on building our virtual care capabilities and adding value to the patient and care team experience in a way that continues to enhance these relationships beyond the COVID-19 crisis.

This work has helped lay the foundation for even more improvements in access to health care among our most vulnerable communities. Now, more than ever, we need to be looking out for each other, especially our most vulnerable neighbors. HB123-SB3 ensures the extension of four policy changes that continue to remove barriers to telehealth during COVID-19 and also brings Maryland in line with neighboring jurisdictions that passed legislation to ensure access to necessary care, regardless of the modality through which it is delivered, is available after the pandemic ends. We thank you for your continued leadership and strongly support and urge the committee's favorable report on HB123-SB3.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Bettina Riveros", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Bettina Tweardy Riveros, Esquire  
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Senior Vice President Government Affairs and Community Engagement  
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