



MARYLAND/DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
SOCIETY OF CLINICAL ONCOLOGY



ASSOCIATION FOR CLINICAL ONCOLOGY

January 27, 2021

The Honorable Shane Pendergrass, Chair  
The Honorable Joseline Pena-Melnyk, Vice Chair  
House Health and Government Operations Committee  
6 Bladen St  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chair Pendergrass, Vice Chair Pena-Melnyk, and Members of the Committee,

The Maryland/District of Columbia Society of Clinical Oncology (MDCSCO) and the Association for Clinical Oncology (ASCO) are pleased to support **House Bill 123: *The Preserve Telehealth Access Act of 2021***, which would allow for patients with cancer to continue receiving necessary care through telemedicine. House Health and Government Operations Committee passage HB 123 would be a crucial step in helping to make sure this valuable method of care is available to Maryland patients after the current public health emergency has ended.

MDCSCO is a professional organization whose mission is to facilitate improvements for Maryland physician specialties in both hematology and oncology. MDCSCO members are a community of hematologists, oncologists, and other physicians who specialize in cancer care. ASCO is a national organization representing physicians who care for people with cancer. With nearly 45,000 members, our core mission is to ensure that cancer patients have meaningful access to high quality cancer care.

MDCSCO and ASCO agree telemedicine has allowed providers to continue treating patients with cancer during the pandemic, both in rural and urban communities, with minimal disruption. Telemedicine has also led to fewer missed appointments than normally experienced with in-person visits. While telemedicine cannot fully replace face to face cancer care, the extension of covered benefits in recent months has rapidly changed the way we see patients and it prompted innovation that has allowed us to safely increase access to high quality care. Our affiliate organization, the American Society of Clinical Oncology, recently published an [Interim Position Statement](#) on Telemedicine in Cancer Care, which highlights the potential for telemedicine to play an important role in cancer care delivery moving forward.

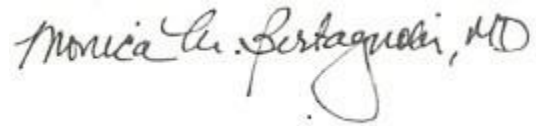
We are encouraged that HB 123 includes coverage and reimbursement for audio-only appointments if video is not available. Not all Maryland patients have the same access to video connection. This provision allows patients without video connection to benefit from critical support afforded through telemedicine appointments.

MDCSCO and ASCO applaud the swift bipartisan efforts thus far in working to deliver greater access to telemedicine in light of the pandemic. If you have questions or would like assistance on any issue involving the care of individuals with cancer, please contact Danna Kauffman at [dkauffman@smwpa.com](mailto:dkauffman@smwpa.com) or Aaron Segel at ASCO at [aaron.segel@asco.org](mailto:aaron.segel@asco.org).

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Paul Celano in black ink.

Paul Celano, MD, FACP  
President  
Maryland/DC Society of Clinical Oncology

Handwritten signature of Monica Bertagnoli, MD, in black ink.

Monica Bertagnoli, MD, FACS, FASCO  
Chair of the Board  
Association for Clinical Oncology