



Committee: House Health and Government Operations Committee

Bill: House Bill 731 – Telehealth Services - Expansions

Date: February 10, 2021

Position: Support

The Maryland Assembly on School-Based Health Care is in strong support of *House Bill 123 – Preserve Telehealth Act of 2021*. The bill supports the provision of telehealth as a strategy to improve health and educational outcomes for students served by school-based health centers. School-based health centers, approved by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), have been able to remain open during the pandemic by continuing to serve students in their homes through telehealth (those without MSDE approval have generally been shuttered). These services have been critical to support the continuity of care to quarantined students, and providers can also assess if any extra supports are needed because the family may be facing multiple stressors.

MASBHC is advocating for changing State policies to support all school-based health centers to provide telehealth services after the pandemic. In addition to modernizing telehealth rules under MSDE, MASBHC is advocating for a fair and consistent reimbursement policy. During the pandemic, many reimbursement restrictions have been relaxed, and this bill seeks to make those permanent, including:

- Ensuring reimbursement follows the patient, so that the patient may be at the location best suited for them. This policy is critical to ensure school-based health centers can reach students in their homes or the homes of any family members;
- Covering telehealth for somatic, behavioral health, and oral health. The inclusion of all three is critical in order to maintain the overall health of students.
- Providing for reimbursement for audio-only services. This provision is a top priority for our school-based health centers. As we have seen with virtual education, many students struggle with access to computers and broadband. We ask for a favorable vote on this legislation.

If we can provide any additional information, please contact, Robyn Elliott at (443) 926-3443 or relliott@policypartners.net.