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

Dear Chair Pendergrass and Members of the Committee:

I'm writing to you today in support of HB123, the Preserve Telehealth Access Act of 2021.

I serve as chief of staff at Howard County General Hospital, and reside in Howard County, and this legislation is vitally important to preserve health care access in our community.

As COVID-19 led many Marylanders to stay home, hospitals and doctors rushed to embrace the long-available but underused tool of telehealth—delivering health care remotely to keep both patients and providers safe.

Emergency federal and state waivers freed hospitals and health systems to ramp up telehealth quickly.

Telehealth during this period was universally supported by patients and by hospital caregivers. They recognized that even beyond times of crisis, telehealth broadens access to care, improves patient outcomes and satisfaction, and chips away at long-standing health inequities.

These benefits must continue beyond federal and state health emergencies.

To help, I ask you to **support the Preserve Telehealth Access Act**. This bill brings Maryland in line with neighboring jurisdictions that passed legislation to ensure access to necessary health care, regardless of the modality through which it is delivered.

Backing away could leave thousands of Marylanders without care: we need long-term solutions to permanently remove barriers to deliver safe, reliable care via telehealth to all Marylanders, wherever they are.

I have personally spoken to many patients and community members who have benefitted from increased access to telehealth. I urge the committee's favorable report on HB123, with amendments confirmed by the Maryland Hospital Association.

Sincerely,

David Nitkin

Chief of Staff  
Howard County General Hospital

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