



JOHN A. OLSZEWSKI, JR.
County Executive

CHARLES R. CONNER III, ESQ.
Director of Government Affairs

JOEL N. BELLER
Deputy Director of Government Affairs

BILL NO.: **HB 123**

TITLE: **Preserve Telehealth Access Act of 2021**

SPONSOR: **Delegate Pena-Melnyk**

COMMITTEE: **Health and Government Operations**

POSITION: **SUPPORT**

DATE: **January 27, 2021**

Baltimore County **SUPPORTS** House Bill 123 – Preserve Telehealth Access Act of 2021. This legislation would expand services provided by the Maryland Medical Assistance Program through telehealth.

The COVID-19 pandemic has not only highlighted the necessity for more available remote treatment options, but has also proven the feasibility of options that had not previously been widely used. Accommodations are currently being made to allow the widespread use of audio-only telehealth services to reduce the burden on in-person facilities during the pandemic. However, the practicability of this service extends beyond times of public health emergencies.

Audio-only telehealth services were shown not only to be an effective means of care in certain circumstances, but have also reduce disparities in healthcare access due to service costs, language gaps, or physical distance from the nearest doctor. Expanding accessibility to essential services is a long-standing priority of Baltimore County. HB 123 would further the mission towards this critical goal by adjusting the Maryland Medical Assistance Program to include audio-only telehealth services. In effect, this legislation would support an equitable and accessibly form of healthcare in perpetuity.

Accordingly, Baltimore County requests a **FAVORABLE** report on HB 123. For more information, please contact Chuck Conner, Director of Government Affairs, at cconner@baltimorecountymd.gov.