



THE COORDINATING CENTER
INSPIRED SOLUTIONS

Committee: House Health and Government Operations Committee
Bill Number: House Bill 123
Title: Preserve Telehealth Act of 2021
Hearing Date: January 27, 2021
Position: Support

The Coordinating Center (The Center) supports *House Bill 123 – Preserve Telehealth Access Act of 2021*. This bill would make permanent telehealth services that are audio-only and allow telehealth services to be provided in an individual’s home or community.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been difficult for everyone, especially those receiving home and community-based services, many of whom are immune compromised. Over the past nine months, our staff have been able to safely provide care coordination services to clients in their homes through telehealth, including a mix of video and audio.

As a provider of complex care coordination, it is critical that we continue to protect the health and safety of our clients going forward. Our 200+ care coordinators (i.e., licensed social workers, nurses, and supports planners) are grateful for the flexibility provided by federal and state emergency orders, which recognize our team as essential workers and permit them to work with our 10,000+ clients with disabilities and complex needs via telehealth. These actions permit our team to continue providing essential health services during this crisis while following State of Maryland recommendations on staying home, teleworking, and maintaining physical distancing.

Even when the federal and state emergency orders end, The Center believes the current flexibilities should remain. Our primary concern is the elimination of the “home” being designated as an originating site for care coordination by Maryland Medicaid. If this occurs, our coordinators will need to resume in-person visits at a time when many of our clients and their family caregivers are not eligible for a vaccine, including children with complex medical needs.

Thank you for your consideration of our testimony, and we urge a favorable vote. If we can provide any further information, please contact Rachael Faulkner at rfaulkner@policypartners.net or (410) 693-4000.