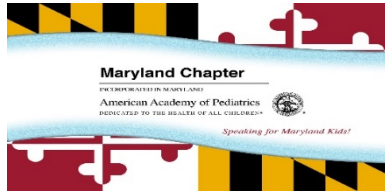




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TO: The Honorable Shane E. Pendergrass, Chair  
 The Honorable Anne R. Kaiser, Chair  
 Members, House Health and Government Operations Committee  
 Members, House Ways and Means Committee  
 The Honorable Samuel I. Rosenberg

FROM: Pamela Metz Kasemeyer  
 J. Steven Wise  
 Danna L. Kauffman

DATE: January 27, 2021

RE: **SUPPORT** – House Bill 34 – *State Department of Education and Maryland Department of Health – Maryland School-Based Health Center Standards – Telehealth*

On behalf of the Maryland State Medical Society, the Maryland Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the Mid-Atlantic Association of Community Health Centers, we submit this letter of **support** for House Bill 34.

House Bill 34 addresses the current outdated framework for the provision of telehealth services by school-based health centers (SBHCs). The legislation is consistent with the findings and recommendations of the Council for the Advancement of School Based Health Centers (CASBHC), which identified as a priority the need to address challenges that SBHCs face in establishing telehealth programs. CASBHC’s Quality and Best Practices Workgroup held several meetings to specifically address barriers to the use of telehealth as well as to identify frameworks for its appropriate adoption and utilization. The Workgroup consulted numerous reference documents and met with the Maryland Department of Health and the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) staff in doing its analysis and compiling its findings and recommendations. House Bill 34 is consistent with a number of their findings and recommendations.

Passage of House Bill 34 is critical if the State is to enable SBHCs, which are often under-resourced, to establish telehealth programs by removing the significant administration barriers that now exist. Further, due to the passage of telehealth legislation in the 2020 Session that established uniform standards for health care providers to provide telehealth across all types of settings there is no longer a need for MSDE’s extensive review and approval process.

Passage of House Bill 34, as emergency legislation, is essential to ensuring that telehealth can be appropriately utilized to improve the health and educational outcomes for students served by SCBHs, not only during this public health emergency, but as a permanent component of the services they have available to meet the needs of the students and families they serve. A favorable report is requested.

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