

CITY OF BALTIMORE

BRANDON M. SCOTT,
Mayor



Mayor's Commission on Disabilities

7 E. Redwood Street, 9th Floor
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

SB 567

February 15, 2021

TO: Members of the Finance Committee
FROM: Janice Jackson, Mayor's Commission on Disabilities
RE: Senate Bill 567 – Telehealth Services – Expansion
POSITION: SUPPORT

Chair Kelley, Vice-Chair Feldman and Members of the Finance Committee, please be advised that the Mayor's Commission on Disabilities for Baltimore City ("MCD") **supports SB 567– Telehealth Services – Expansion**

If enacted, this bill shall alter the health care services the Maryland Medical Assistance Program is required to provide through telehealth; alter the circumstances under which the Program is required to provide health care services through telehealth; alter a provision of law requiring certain insurers, nonprofit health service plans, and health maintenance organizations to reimburse certain health care services provided through telehealth and to require reimbursement to be provided in a certain manner and at a certain rate; etc.

Further, MCD has received numerous complaints regarding the Mobility Link Service provided by the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA). As a person who utilizes a wheelchair and often depends on Mobility to go to medical appointments, I have experienced first-hand unreliability of the transit system which has sometimes led to missed and late appointments.

As a result of the pandemic and my underlying health conditions, I have not left my apartment building since March 2020. However, the telehealth option has enabled me to continue receiving medical care without the reliance of public transportation. The extension of telehealth will enhance my quality of life as well as others in the disability community. In addition, I am a strong proponent of expanded mental health telehealth services and providers. Because of increased isolation, many persons are reliant on telehealth for mental health care.

The MCD only wishes to amplify the dire need for this legislation for those persons with disabilities who depend for their well-being and quality of life on telehealth. This bill thus represents a critical step to improving the lives of our constituency.

For the above reasons, we respectfully request a **favorable report** on **Senate Bill 567**.