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BILL NO.: SB 534

TITLE: Preserve Telehealth Access Act of 2023

SPONSOR: Senator Gile

COMMITTEE: Finance

POSITION: **SUPPORT**

DATE: February 22, 2023

Baltimore County **SUPPORTS** Senate Bill 534 Preserve Telehealth Access Act of 2023. This legislation would extend the inclusion of certain audio-only telephone conversations under the definition of “telehealth”.

The COVID pandemic served as a grave reminder that many still struggle to access critical healthcare services. The development and use of telehealth was instrumental to connecting residents who lacked transportation, wanted to reduce the spread of illness, or simply did not have time to travel to a doctor’s office with healthcare providers. Telehealth allows for all residents to receive treatment and preventative care regardless of their geographic or economic status.

SB 534 extends the inclusion of audio-only telephone conversations under the definition of “telehealth” through 2025. This legislation ensures that audio-only telephone visits can still be covered by health insurance, fostering equitable access to healthcare. Low-income residents, rural residents, and working families benefit from telehealth services the most; this legislation ensures that they will not be stuck with the bill.

Accordingly, Baltimore County requests a **FAVORABLE** report on SB 534. For more information, please contact Jenn Aiosa, Director of Government Affairs at jaiosa@baltimorecountymd.gov.