



**Testimony on SB 534**  
**Preserve Telehealth Act of 2023**  
Senate Finance  
February 22, 2023  
**POSITION: SUPPORT**

The Maryland Association of Youth Service Bureaus (MAYSB) respectfully requests that you give SB 534 a favorable report.

Throughout COVID-19, MAYSB mental health and substance use providers found that telehealth service options were critical to clients' engagement, care, stabilization, and recovery. Telehealth has proven itself as an ongoing integral method to maintaining consistent therapy and medication management and a quality connection to our clients. It continues to do so today for specific clients and specific situations.

While many therapists and psychiatric providers use telehealth on a limited basis, preferring face-to-face, when possible, telehealth and audio-only telehealth, specifically, have merits for serving our clients.

The audio-only ability is critical to certain patients when video sessions are not possible. Below are some examples of the vital need to keep audio-only capability:

- When a client/patient is in a rural location with no internet capability or low signal strength location.
- When a client/patient cannot afford Wi-Fi at home.
- When internet connectivity fails during a video session. The therapist or doctor can make a call immediately and continue the session.
- When a client/patient's video capability is limited due to their lack of ability to manage the logistics of video equipment.
- When a client/patient suffers from significant anxiety, which impedes their ability to manage video equipment.

Audio-only has proven an ongoing integral method to maintaining treatment for some clients served by MD Youth Service Bureaus. For the above reasons we ask that you support SB 534.

Respectfully Submitted:

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