



MARYLAND DOWN SYNDROME  
ADVOCACY COALITION

**SB373: Preserve Telehealth Access Act of 2025**

**February 5, 2025**

**Position: Support**

The Maryland Down Syndrome Advocacy Coalition (MDAC) is a coalition of the five Down syndrome organizations in Maryland as well as individuals with Down syndrome and their family members who have come together to advocate for improved quality of life for all individuals with Down syndrome throughout the state of Maryland. MDAC works in coalition with other disability and advocacy organizations across the state and supports many legislative and policy efforts.

MDAC supports SB373 which would repeal the current time limitation on certain telehealth services. This bill is important to our community because it would protect equitable access to telehealth services for individuals with Down syndrome and other medically complex conditions by maintaining the current reimbursement requirements under the Maryland Medical Assistance Program and private insurers. Repealing these protections would create significant hardship for families who rely on telehealth to manage the specialized and often intensive healthcare needs of their children or loved ones with disabilities.

Many individuals with Down syndrome have co-occurring medical conditions such as congenital heart defects, respiratory issues, sleep apnea, epilepsy, autoimmune disorders, and developmental disabilities that require ongoing care from multiple specialists. Telehealth has been a critical lifeline in reducing barriers to this care, allowing families to avoid the logistical and financial burdens of frequent travel, long wait times, and disruptions to both school and work schedules—challenges that feel insurmountable for families simply trying to juggle day-to-day life while caring for a medically complex child or loved one. If reimbursement rates were no longer standardized and guaranteed, providers may limit or discontinue virtual services, forcing families to navigate an already strained healthcare system with fewer options.

Many families were recently informed that, effective February 1, 2025, they will lose the option to see specialists virtually through Kennedy Krieger Institute (KKI), a medical facility that many families in our Down syndrome community rely heavily upon. KKI has many specialists that are able to offer ongoing care without ever needing to lay hands on their patients, e.g., medication management, therapy, neuropsychiatry, genetic counseling, etc.

The decision to eliminate telehealth would disproportionately impact low-income, rural, and working families who rely on telehealth to access essential medical services. Without consistent

access to telehealth, preventable complications would also increase, leading to more frequent emergency room visits, hospitalizations, and poorer health outcomes.

For these reasons, MDAC strongly supports SB372 and urges you to uphold these vital protections and ensure that all Maryland families continue to receive the high-quality, accessible health care that they deserve. Thank you for your consideration of this critical issue.

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Zogby and Lauren Ochalek  
Co-Chairs, Maryland Down Syndrome Advocacy Coalition