



111 Michigan Ave NW  
Washington, DC 20010-2916  
ChildrensNational.org

**Ricardo Munoz, MD, FAAP, FCCM, FACC**  
**Chief, Division of Cardiac Critical Care Medicine**  
**Executive Director, Telemedicine**  
**Children's National Hospital**

**Tejal Raichura, MHA**  
**Director, Telemedicine**  
**Children's National Hospital**

**HB 869: Preserve Telehealth Access Act of 2025**  
**Position: FAVORABLE**  
**February 13, 2025**  
**House Health and Government Operations Committee**

Chair Peña-Melnyk, Vice Chair Cullison and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in favor of House Bill 869. My name is Tejal Raichura, and I am the Director of Telemedicine at Children's National Hospital. Children's National has been serving the nation's children since 1870. Nearly 60% of our patients are residents of Maryland, and we maintain a network of community-based pediatric practices, surgery centers and regional outpatient centers in Maryland.

We know that both nationally and in Maryland, telehealth utilization remains significantly higher than pre pandemic levels.<sup>1</sup> Telehealth has become an integral part of the health care delivery system – an option that both patients and providers desire. The Children's National Telehealth program enables our healthcare providers to help families, physicians and other healthcare partners receive care or guidance through video visits all from home – reducing travel time to appointments and minimizing time taken away from work and school. These visits transcend geographic barriers through virtual care.<sup>2</sup> Telehealth appointments account for a large portion of our clinical service, and we are committed to promoting quality virtual health services for patients and families because we believe it can increase access to quality pediatric health care.

---

<sup>1</sup> Sergent, R., & Steffen, B. (2024). *Preserve Telehealth Access Act of 2023 / Behavioral Health Care -Treatment and Access Act Telehealth Recommendations*.

[https://dlslibrary.state.md.us/publications/Exec/MDH/MHCC/HB1148Ch291\(2023\)\\_2024.pdf](https://dlslibrary.state.md.us/publications/Exec/MDH/MHCC/HB1148Ch291(2023)_2024.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> [Telehealth | Children's National Hospital](#)

Children's National strongly supports House Bill 869, which will remove the June 2025 sunset provision, allowing for the continued delivery of telehealth services via audio-only modalities and ensuring reimbursement parity between telehealth and in-person services. Ensuring continued access to telehealth services in Maryland is critical to increasing access to care for certain vulnerable populations that we serve. An example of the impact of virtual care is in the mental and behavioral health sector; an area that has seen an overwhelming increase in demand. By expanding telehealth services, we can increase access for children and families dealing with mental health issues, which is often a challenge with traditional in-person visits due to stigma or logistical barriers. Telehealth allows patients to be seen for multiple follow-up visits with minimal disruption to patients' daily lives and promotes engagement in preventative care. Ultimately, should the General Assembly pass this bill, Maryland will be more aligned with CMS and a growing number of other states.<sup>3</sup>

The removal of the sunset provision proposed in HB 869 and the inclusion of audio-only telehealth services are crucial steps in building a more resilient healthcare system. This bill not only supports the current needs of Maryland's residents but also lays a foundation for innovation in the virtual care space. As other states and CMS have recognized, telehealth is not merely a temporary solution used during unprecedented times but a necessary evolution of our healthcare infrastructure. By passing House Bill 869, Maryland will not only enhance its healthcare capabilities but also demonstrate a commitment to equity in healthcare access. It is imperative that we ensure all Marylanders, regardless of location, income, or mobility, have equal opportunities to access the care they need.

I applaud Chair Peña-Melnyk for introducing this important legislation, which will have life-long benefits for our state's youngest residents and their families and respectfully request a favorable report on House Bill 869. Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony.

**For more information, please contact:**

Austin Morris, Government Affairs Manager  
almorris@childrensnational.org

---

<sup>3</sup> Sergent, R., & Steffen, B. (2024). *Preserve Telehealth Access Act of 2023 / Behavioral Health Care -Treatment and Access Act Telehealth Recommendations*.  
[https://dlslibrary.state.md.us/publications/Exec/MDH/MHCC/HB1148Ch291\(2023\)\\_2024.pdf](https://dlslibrary.state.md.us/publications/Exec/MDH/MHCC/HB1148Ch291(2023)_2024.pdf)