



## Colorado Consumer Health Initiative

June 2, 2020

Dear Senator,

Today, the Senate State, Veterans, and Military Affairs committee is scheduled to hear SB20-212, "Reimbursement for Telehealth Services." This bill preserves access to telehealth services by ensuring payment parity for providers and consumers, and allowing consumers to establish care with providers via telehealth. SB20-212 will continue to keep consumers and providers safe, while increasing access to health care for Coloradans. The Colorado Consumer Health Initiative (CCHI) **is writing in strong support of SB20-212 and respectfully asks for a "yes" vote.**

While Coloradans have been dealing with the public health emergency brought on by COVID-19, they have experienced increased anxiety, fear, and uncertainty in their daily lives. Many have lost jobs, and those who can work from home have had their routines uprooted. This crisis only underscores the need to close existing gaps in our health care system so patients can truly get the care they need, when they need it.

Telehealth has become a necessity during this time in order for patients to continue care while keeping safe and limiting their exposure and the exposure of others. It has also become a necessity for patients seeking new care in order to deal with both physical and mental health stressors brought on by the pandemic. Independent of the outbreak, telehealth provides an additional method of receiving care for patients that have time and transportation barriers and for those that live in rural areas.

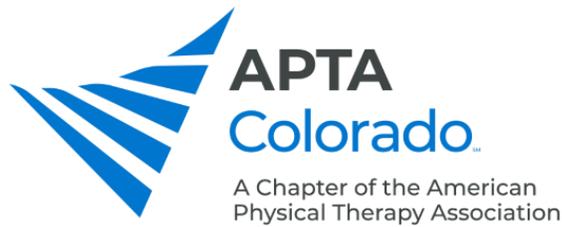
The current crisis has pushed many providers to rapidly increase access to care via telehealth, and that progress should not be lost after we return to a more normal state. As we've seen over the last couple of months, there are many health care visits that do not require face-to-face interaction. This increased access to care is not only crucial to maintain for those that have adapted to a new form of delivery, it can also save costs in our health care system. Patients that have greater access to care are more likely to seek services when they are necessary, rather than foregoing care only to result in higher costs later on.

The expanded access to telehealth services has kept consumers and providers safe, while allowing patients to continue their treatment and maintain care with their providers. In the next few months (maybe even years) many consumers will still be hesitant to seek care in-person. In order to keep our communities healthy, we must preserve the ability to seek care virtually.

For these reasons, CCHI supports SB20-212 and we urge you to vote "yes".

Sincerely,

Caitlin Westerson  
*Policy Director*  
[cwesterson@cohealthinitiative.org](mailto:cwesterson@cohealthinitiative.org)



June 2, 2020

Dear Chairman Foote and members of the Senate State, Veterans, and Military Affairs Committee,

Thank you in advance for your thoughtful consideration of SB20-212 and the importance of telehealth for the future of health care in Colorado. The American Physical Therapy Association – Colorado Chapter (APTA-CO) is a professional, non-profit membership organization of approximately 2,455 physical therapists and physical therapist assistants in Colorado. APTA-CO first met in 1937 and was incorporated February 17, 1953. APTA-CO is in strong support of SB20-212 and ask that you vote in favor of the legislation.

During the COVID-19 public health emergency, telehealth services were expanded in Medicaid (March 18, 2020) and in the private insurance market (E.O. 2020-20). These actions kept consumers and care providers safe and allowed patients to continue their care plan with their providers. This access will be removed when the declared emergency ends unless the state Legislature acts. This bill ensures that patients and caregivers are safe and promote convenient personalized care after the emergency rules expire.

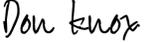
Telehealth is playing an important role in keeping Coloradans safe during the COVID-19 pandemic, but its benefits extend far beyond the current outbreak. We should not stop this progress. Telehealth has proven to be popular amongst consumers and providers from all ends of the state.

This bill is vital to guaranteeing access to care and continuity of care for all Coloradans. SB20-212 allows for assessment, diagnosis, consultation, treatment, education, care management, self-management, remote monitoring or recommendations for a consumer to be done remotely. In no way does the bill expand the scope of practice for physical therapists or any other provider nor does it change the standard of care for consumers or violate requirements under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

APTA-CO would also like to stress the importance of parity in telehealth access in both Medicaid and private insurance. Keeping the systems aligned provides for clarity for both consumers and providers and ensures that no Coloradan is left behind because of how they pay for healthcare.

Thank you for your consideration of this exciting legislation and your commitment to improving health care access in the state. Please do not hesitate to reach out to us if you have any questions, comments, or concerns.

Sincerely,

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Don Knox

Executive Director, APTA-CO

**Telehealth Testimonials:**

*“This mode of service delivery has opened up a whole new way of providing therapy services to our pediatric population. Our families have increased involvement and are more engaged in the therapy process, they are more consistent with follow through of treatment programs, we are able to continue to provide services when the family is not able to do in home therapy, it allows those in rural areas to receive services, and it protects our most vulnerable from many diseases, not just COVID-19.”*

-Brenda, Parker

*“Telehealth has allowed my trust and relationships to my clients and families grow stronger. We facilitate communication now together, as a team. Parents feel more supported and bring me into their daily routines.”*

-Rachel, Denver

*“Telehealth should be permanently available base on provider and family's decision and what's best for the patient. Some patient's diagnosis is more severed or immunocompromised so telehealth may be the only option that's best for the patient, family, and provider.”*

-Maiku, Aurora

*“Telehealth has allowed me to continue to give therapy services to my clients, therefore reducing their overall health needs and increasing their quality of life. Continuing this option will allow families with immunocompromised members to continue to receive services during vulnerable times such as flu season, when they are typically cut off from services and providers in their home.”*

-Rachel, Centennial

*“I would like to share with you the big success my families and I have accomplished using telehealth, especially during this time in which we have to combine being safe and effective at providing speech services. My patients have been very engaged in the activities, and parents are more willing to receive coaching; they are very pleased and would benefit from continuing receiving services via telehealth.”*

-Karina, Loveland

*“Telehealth in rural Colorado is an important part of the health care delivery system, including access. My job and the job of my colleagues depend on telehealth not only during the COVID-19 pandemic but beyond.”*

-Anne, Steamboat Springs





June 2, 2020

Dear Chairman Foote and members of the Senate State, Veterans, and Military Affairs Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony on SB20-212 and explain why this legislation is vital for home care and hospice agencies, caregivers and the chronically ill, disabled and dying Coloradans we serve. The Home Care and Hospice Association of Colorado (HHAC) was founded in 1970. The association is made up of all sized agencies with a wide range of services and serve clients in all 64 counties. HHAC is proud to support the telehealth bill, which maintains the expanded access to telehealth services that was initiated by the COVID-19 public health emergency.

During the COVID-19 public health emergency, telehealth services were expanded in Medicaid (March 18, 2020) and in the private insurance market (E.O. 2020-20). Telehealth is especially important for HHAC as keeping caregivers safe has been of utmost importance given the lack of personal protective equipment and testing made available to agencies. These actions kept consumers and care providers safe and allowed patients to continue their care plan with their providers. This access will be removed when the declared emergency ends unless the state Legislature acts. This bill ensures that patients and caregivers are safe and promote convenient personalized care after the emergency rules expire.

Telehealth is playing an important role in keeping Coloradans safe during the COVID-19 pandemic, but its benefits extend far beyond the current situation. We should not stop this progress. Telehealth has proven to be popular amongst clients, home health providers and caregivers who enjoy both the peace of mind and added convenience (*please see the attached document with testimonials from clients and providers*).

This bill is needed to ensure home care and hospice clients have access to desperately needed care. SB20-212 allows for assessment, diagnosis, consultation, treatment, education, care management, self-management, remote monitoring or recommendations for a consumer to be done remotely. In no way does the bill expand the scope of practice for providers. The bill requires that home health, personal care and homemaker and hospice services delivered via telehealth meet the same standard of care as in-person care.

HHAC would also like to stress the importance the parity in billing under Medicaid for in-person and telehealth visits outlined in the bill. Reimbursement rates are already low for our providers.

If telehealth was billed at a lesser reimbursement rate, most agencies would not find it feasible to offer telehealth to Medicaid clients.

Thank you for your thoughtful deliberation on Senate Bill 212. It is vital that all Coloradans, and especially seniors, people with disabilities and rural community members, are able to continue to use telehealth services to safely and conveniently receive medical care.

Please feel free to reach out with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:  
  
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Don Knox  
Executive Director, HHAC

### Telehealth Testimonials

*“Operating a rural home care business is often very difficult under the best of circumstance, but recently we have seen how beneficial it is to have the ability to use telehealth and teleconferencing with our clients. I would like to encourage our leaders to consider this resource for our Medicaid and private health insurances markets.”*

-Lourae, Walsenburg

*“As a provider of telehealth and as a recipient of telehealth for my special needs twins, the option for telehealth services is amazing. I have been able to treat kids with highly complicated situations and highly compromised immune systems without fear of infecting them. Also, providers have been able to continue seeing our twins with special needs as well. This system allows for few chances of my boys experiencing a lack in services due to sickness, holidays, etc. I can't emphasize it's importance to continue enough.”*

-Angie, Colorado Springs

*“Our daughter has complex medical issues. Telehealth is allowing her to interact with her doctors and specialists in a safer more effective manner. The very real risks of infection are greatly reduced. For her the flu, common cold, staph, are weeks of illness with multiple antibiotics, steroids, antivirals plus secondary infections. She's able to participate more in her care as well since she's in a comfortable environment. It's allowed us to get better interactions with shorter visits due to her being able to go to her room when her "part" is done. Her specialists are also able to schedule her more conveniently this way. Giving us access to better care. Please keep telehealth, for families like ours it's invaluable.”*

-Jacquelyn, Denver

*“My children, adopted from foster care, have anxiety and PTSD and are truly worries about going to therapy appointments. The ability to maintain our therapies while also tending to their anxiety and maintaining social distance is so very important. Please support us in maintaining the health of our children.”*

-Ariel, Englewood

*“I would like to advocate to please continue to allow health care agencies to perform telehealth services. As we move along this pandemic and we innovate our programs to be able to provide the necessary care for our hospice patients, having the ability and approval to use telehealth services has been a huge positive impact in our healthcare field. We have been able to provide the high level of care to our patients virtually and meet their needs without risking others life. Please consider keeping telehealth services available.”*

-Diana, Wheat Ridge

June 2, 2020

Re: SB20-212

Thank you, Chairmen Foote and the members of the Senate Stater Affairs committee for giving us an opportunity to submit written testimony.

My name is Pamela DiPasquale-Lehnerz and I am currently the President of the Occupational Therapy Association of Colorado. There are approximately 5000 occupational therapy practitioners in the state of Colorado. Our organization supports and represents both occupational therapists and occupational therapy assistants.

**We ask for your support of SB20-212 which provides for telehealth services for those that need occupational therapy services and ensures that the consumers of health services are protected.**

Occupational therapy has a more than 100-year history in this country of providing care to individuals who have suffered significant mental and physical health impacts as a result of stroke, mental health disorders, traumatic brain injury, spinal cord injury, birth defects, autism, chronic pain, amputations, and disease processes such as rheumatoid arthritis, multiple sclerosis, Alzheimer's and cancer. As occupational therapy practitioners, we have been involved in the health consequences of both World Wars, the mechanization of farm machinery, automation in our factories, the polio epidemic, traumatic auto accidents and rehabilitation of individuals who have computer overuse injuries.

**We continue to evolve our practice to meet the current needs of society which now includes telehealth services to home health, pediatric and school-based therapy because of COVID 19. Not all care can be provided through telehealth but many of our services can be established and continued with this delivery method.**

This legislation insures the most vulnerable populations continue to receive care in a safe and effective manner. Occupational therapists treat populations who are compromised either permanently or temporarily in cognition, mental health and mobility functions obtain services. These individuals are our elderly in skilled

nursing facilities, those with mental health disabilities in psychiatric settings, adults with cognitive delays in group homes, children with significant developmental delays in the schools and people with compromised health conditions that put them at risk for long term care societal needs.

We work with our clients or patients to return them to work, increase their self-care independence, ensure successful accommodation to schools, keep them in their homes, promote community reintegration and general wellness.

**Colorado occupational therapy consumers need your protection afforded by continuing our services with telehealth care to continue the occupational therapy plan of care in a safe and effective manner.**

Sincerely,

Pam DiPasquale-Lehnerz, MS, OTR/L

President

Occupational Therapy Association of Colorado

June 2, 2020

Dear Chairmen Foote and Members of the Senate State Affairs Committee:

RE: SB20-212

It has been brought to my attention that the Reimbursing Health Care Providers for [Telehealth Senate Bill 20-212](#) is currently under review in the state Senate. Occupational therapy services are vital to allowing individuals to learn and develop skills to improve independence; prevent falls or further injury; address pain, sensation, coordination, and strength; access communities resources; and even to compensate for injury or illness. In order to meet our societies needs, occupational therapy services should include all delivery systems including telehealth.

Telehealth has gained much attention in the past few months due to the onset of the COVID 19 pandemic. While telehealth has existed for quite some time, **it hasn't been used to its full extent due to insurance reimbursement limitations and therefore limited acknowledgment from OT practitioners.** Telehealth is a vital service platform not only during this pandemic, but ongoing due to the ability for our most vulnerable clients to be evaluated and treated safely, effectively, and efficiently.

Telehealth allows OT practitioners to work with clients in the safety of their own homes, in rural areas, or with assist from caregivers allowing for improved communication and carryover. I have been directly involved in working with older adults via telehealth, and it has allowed my patients who may otherwise not have access to services be provided with home safety assessments (for example, patients in Park and Teller counties via Medicaid), home safety recommendations (as patients are seen in their own environment), and improved function and independence.

My patients have felt safe in that they are able to stay home, limit exposure to COVID 19, and still continue to receive needed OT services all through audio-visual technology. While telehealth services aren't for everyone, they have been very beneficial for most. Both patients and caregivers have appreciated the ability to continue receiving therapy services when they may otherwise decline, increase their fall risk, and end up hospitalized. **Based on the positive results of telehealth at this time, I believe telehealth services should continue to be reimbursed from payment sources even outside of this pandemic.**

Thank you,

Jennifer Junker, OTD, OTR/L



June 2, 2020

Dear Members of the State, Veterans and Military Affairs Committee,

My name is Courtney Despos. I am a Colorado-licensed Physical Therapist and the Regional Vice President for Aveanna Healthcare's Therapy Division whose office is located at 304 Inverness Way, Suite 125, in Englewood, Colorado. Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony on behalf of Aveanna, its clinicians, and most important, our patients and their families, in support of SB20-212, Reimbursement for Telehealth Services.

Aveanna, through the over 100 licensed Physical, Occupational and Speech Therapists we employ here in Colorado, provides therapy services to roughly 1,000 patients in their homes throughout the state. Most of our patients are pediatric and many are enrolled in Colorado Medicaid.

During the last several months, we have fought mightily to ensure that our patients continue to receive their therapy services. We have seen the unique power, convenience, efficiency, and effectiveness of Telehealth in our therapy visits these last few months when home visits were not possible. Thanks to our ability to provide care via Telehealth throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, we continue to achieve success in meeting our patients' goals for therapy.

Receiving therapy services via telehealth has multiple benefits.

- Prevents regression and promotes advancement. Regression in particular, without telehealth, would be an enormous problem during COVID-19.
- Built on the same treatment protocols that are used whether in person in a clinic or in the home and can be as effective as clinic and home-based therapy
- Offers family friendly access to care and convenience to the family, child, and therapist when home visits are not possible helping to ensure uninterrupted services that could impede progress towards achieving the stated goals of therapy.
- Allows children to work in their home environment helping to alleviate the stress of a different environment
- Enhances the productivity of therapists by reducing travel time
- Offers parents the ability to interact and participate more easily
- Safeguards ensure that this platform cannot be fraudulently used.
- Systems used provide accurate records for audits, billing and payments
- Allows for telehealth to become a regular component of treatment offering patients and their families additional options to access care.

We strongly urge that you and your fellow members of the Colorado Legislature adopt SB20-212, so that these services via Telehealth can continue to be an option for patients to access their care through this current pandemic and beyond.

- It is the way of the future. We've seen that through the pandemic, but now we have seen just how effective and efficient it can be.



- It saves transportation costs.
- It helps therapists be more efficient and able to see more children in their homes in a day.
- This helps us serve more children and thereby reducing some of the need to hire hard to find, highly skilled therapists.
- Especially in Colorado, Teletherapy helps serve rural families who would otherwise have a hard time connecting with therapy services.

On the following pages, I have provided examples of how our patients, their families and our clinicians have benefited from the ability to provide and receive therapy services via telehealth. What we've consistently heard from our therapists is the level of engagement the use of telehealth requires not only from the patient, but ultimately their parents and guardians. Their feedback consistently details the marked increase in participation levels they are experiencing because of telehealth. This heightened engagement can increase the speed at which the children progress since they are more receptive and positively impacted from their parents and guardians direct hands-on input and participation, and not just by their therapist alone providing care. More parental engagement can lead to better and more rapid outcome meaning reduced time in treatment and fewer Medicaid dollars spent to provide care.

Through these stories, I feel strongly that you will see the importance of allowing the use of telehealth for therapy services for all Coloradans not just during the current pandemic but going forward in the future.

We would ask that you support and approve SB20-212 to ensure that happens.

## Cori Joyce, Physical Therapist

During this crisis telemedicine has been very helpful in that I can stay home and keep my family safe while also being able to continue to treat my wonderful patients.

My families have been amazing during this time using telemedicine and I get to see a different side of my patients as some of them have been babbling more and participating better than in person visits. They get to work more with their parents and parents are putting their hands on more and facilitating more positions and position changes.



My parents are happy that their child or children are still being treated even during a crisis and they have stated that they are happy with the telemedicine and that their child (ren) continue to make improvements.

The feedback received from families who are taking advantage of the Telemedicine option during these unprecedented times is very positive. Patients are participating differently with parents involved, while the parent involvement has been beneficial for the patients and educational for the parents.





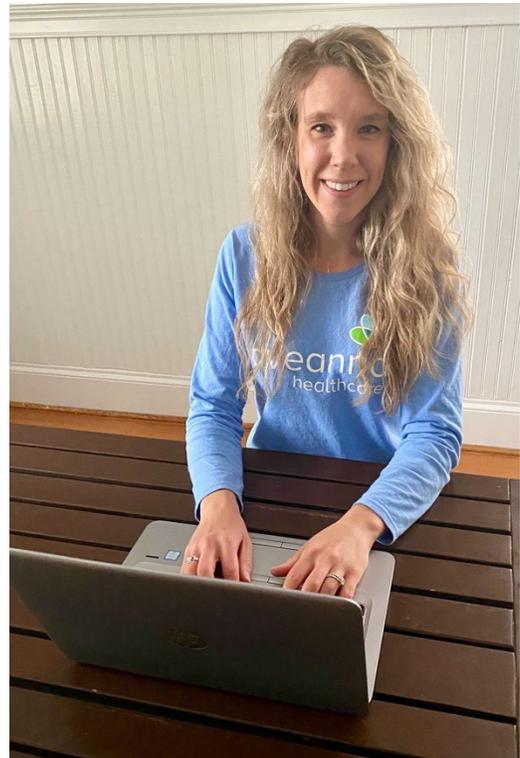
## Mary Seacrest, Occupational Therapist

When I first heard Aveanna Healthcare was starting telehealth services, to say I was feeling uncertain would be an understatement. Occupational therapy through a computer? How am I going to provide meaningful sessions to my clients when I can't be in the room with them? After talking with the families on my caseload I learned they also had concerns. How can they be expected to be the hands of the therapist? What if their child does not want to or have the ability to sit through a therapy session on the computer? What if they cannot figure out the technology?

I soon pushed my hesitations aside and started focusing on the positives and the endless possibilities. We are pediatric therapists; we are creative, quick thinkers, and most importantly flexible. If we can have success in everyday sessions, telehealth sessions should be no different. I have loved being able to work with my clients and families in a traditional session and hearing about how they are progressing at home. I soon realized the telehealth platform would provide me the opportunity to see my clients in their home environment, and to help them directly with their goals in a functional way. So I did a little bit (okay, a lot) of research and was ready!

From the first telehealth session I was sold. My clients and I work on a variety of skills, including but not limited to, feeding, dressing, and handwriting. Telehealth has allowed me to support and guide families through challenging scenarios, and to encourage them to utilize strategies practiced in the clinic during traditional therapy sessions. Practicing these skills as they occur naturally during the day has proven motivating to many children, as it can feel less like "work." Due to recent events, parents are having to take on many more roles, particularly when it comes to their child's education. I have had a number of parents express their concern and frustration about their child's schoolwork. The nature of our telehealth sessions has allowed me as the therapist to provide the family with suggestions based on the child's schoolwork and current challenges, therefore easing the parent's concerns and increasing the child's level of independence within the task.

One of the first clients I worked with through the telehealth platform is a teenager who has many goals targeting independence in self-care and daily routines. We have spent our sessions in the clinic practicing these skills and helping him prepare to use them at home. Suddenly we were presented with the opportunity to work on these functional skills in an organic way. We started our first session with the client making his breakfast, an activity that he had previously participated in only minimally. His mother was eager to offer support and encouragement. We worked together to provide strategies for him to use to independently gather what he needed, and to safely prepare and clean up his meal.





This client's mother was thrilled to see her son so successful in an activity he would be able to perform every day. It started a discussion about what other activities at home he could do with a greater level of independence. His mother expressed that the morning and evening routines were becoming rather tedious with constantly monitoring his participation and task completion. She and I worked collaboratively to create checklists for him to use throughout the day. Since our session took place in their home, the client was able to practice utilizing the checklists right away in his natural environment. This allowed me to see firsthand what worked and what did not, and to make adaptations and additional suggestions on the spot. This client's mother has reported continued success with these daily routines. As a result, we continue to add to his responsibilities. Telehealth sessions have allowed us to work collaboratively to increase this child's active role in his daily routines and to enhance his role in his home.

I would be lying if I said telehealth was an immediate success for every client. There have certainly been challenging moments: coming up with ways to therapeutically use the client's toys he or she has at home, and coming up with creative alternatives when needed; keeping a three year old engaged and motivated through a screen for an hour; and figuring out why the audio just does not seem to be working. However, these have merely been obstacles. Using the telehealth platform has been a learning process for us all, but the fundamental components of our sessions and our mission remain the same.

Overall telehealth has allowed therapists, clients, and families to address goals and to implement skills in real-life scenarios. While I, like my colleagues, miss seeing my clients in person, it is incredible to be able to offer practical recommendations and strategies, as well as witness the success of our clients in their daily lives.

We are all facing uncertainty as we travel through uncharted territory. There have been so many unknowns and changes for us all. It is amazing we as therapists are able to remain a part of the lives of our clients and their families, as well as to continue to help them meet their goals.



## Patient, Miranda and her Speech Language Pathologist, Marvey

My name is Marvey, and I'm a speech-language pathologist. I have the pleasure to work with Miranda, a soon-to-be nine-year-old with the biggest heart of gold.

Miranda is a spunky little girl who loves to play and dance and, most of all, loves social interactions. In recent weeks, Miranda's daily routine changed dramatically, and she was really missing her school friends and her therapy sessions. Then we began teletherapy sessions for Miranda.

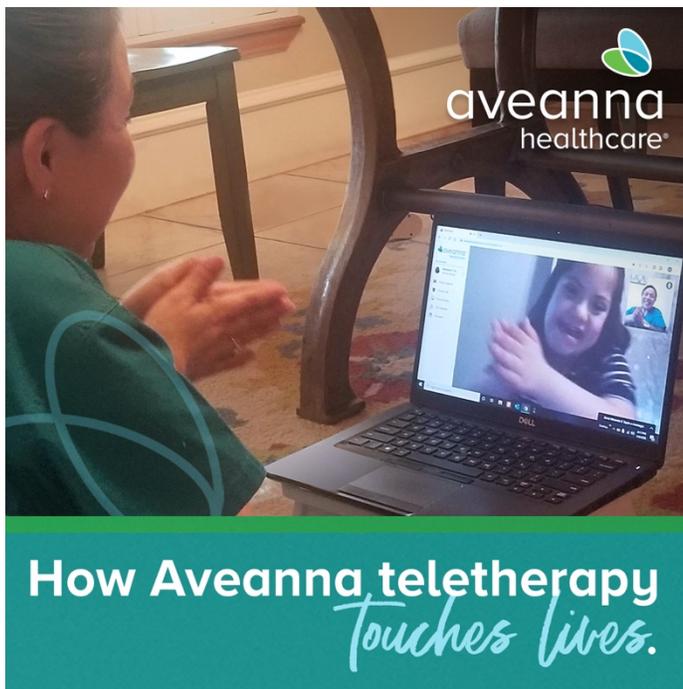
The first speech therapy session via teletherapy was the happiest day for both Miranda and me. Miranda's face lit up as soon as we connected, and she greeted me with a smile from ear to ear! She happily said, "Hi Ma-vey" (the "r" sound is challenging for her).

Teletherapy has allowed Miranda to continue to work on her language, articulation, and active oral motor skills, all with the help of her mom – who, may I add, is amazing to work with too! During our sessions, screen-to-screen high fives are given for a job well done, and at the end, "air-hugs" are exchanged! Soon, Miranda will be having a birthday, and thanks to teletherapy, we will still have the opportunity to celebrate it together!

## Emily Khanh, Speech Therapist

When I first heard we would be doing teletherapy, I was apprehensive but thrilled! Most of my patients haven't been able to be seen due to COVID-19. With schools shutting down, it made me worry that the progress I've made with my patients might have regressed. I have one patient in particular that's been on my mind. Typically, in our sessions, she's great. She works hard, is always smiling, and oftentimes does get easily distracted. Right before Spring break, she had a lot of changes occurring in her personal life. From being separated away from her siblings and parents, change in guardianship, to having school schedule changes. I didn't know how this would go. Will she pay attention to me without having the positive reinforcements I typically bring? How is she feeling? What can I do to help take any added pressure off of her?

My first speech teletherapy session with her, I felt nervous. Our session started off smooth and she was excited to see me. We talked, caught up on life, she showed me her JoJo Siwa bows, and her new home. She was happy. I was happy. Getting back into the groove of therapy with her was just easy, a weight lifted





off my shoulders. We literally picked up right where we left off. The breaks that were typically needed, were not. We addressed EVERY GOAL with ease and by the end of our session, we had extra time. Typically, in my sessions, extra time means time for bubbles. That day, extra time meant "DANCE PARTY!" I let her pick out a song (of course she picked a JoJo Siwa song), shared my screen, and we just danced together. It was perfect! I was so glad to see that throughout all of these changes in her life, speech therapy was still able to be a positive part of her day!





COLORADO ACADEMY OF  
FAMILY PHYSICIANS

June 1, 2020

Senate State, Veterans and Military Affairs Committee Members  
Colorado General Assembly  
200 E. Colfax Avenue  
Denver, CO 80203

**RE: Support for SB20-212 Reimbursement for Telehealth Services**

Dear Mr. Chair and Members of the Committee:

I write today on behalf of over 2,600 members of the Colorado Academy of Family Physicians (CAFP) to urge your support for *Senate Bill 20-212 Reimbursement for Telehealth Services*. This bill will make critical telehealth services available to patients and maintain a crucial mode of healthcare delivery for primary care practices around the state.

Telehealth offers an opportunity to provide needed care for our patients when they might be unable to visit the office in person, or when they must travel long distances to visit their doctor in rural communities. We can often take care of a patient's needs through a telehealth visit. However, until recent temporary policy changes were enacted, not every patient was able to take advantage of this important tool. Patients in rural areas without broadband access and patients without a smartphone that have video capabilities were not able to use telehealth because a telephone visit was not reimbursable. SB20-212 would enable appropriate services provided over the telephone to be reimbursed.

The COVID-19 pandemic underscores the need to maintain the availability of telehealth into the future. Our practices have undergone years of transformation in a matter of weeks, in order to integrate telehealth into our practice models and safely provide care to patients with COVID-19 or those who are at risk of contracting the disease. SB20-212 will ensure doctors and their patients have the appropriate tools at their disposal to get the healthcare they need now and into the future.

On behalf of CAFP and family physicians around the state, I strongly urge a "Yes" vote on SB20-212.

Sincerely,

John Cawley, MD, FAAFP  
President

June 2, 2020

Members of the Senate State, Veterans, & Military Affairs Committee  
Colorado State Capitol  
200 E. Colfax Ave  
Denver, CO 80203

RE: Written testimony in support of SB20-212 Reimbursement for Telehealth Services

Honorable Members of the Senate Veterans & Military Affairs Committee,

On behalf of the Colorado Society of Eye Physicians and Surgeons and ophthalmologists across the state, I want to thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB20-212 Reimbursement for Telehealth Services. We support this bill as a way to enhance the affordability and accessibility of health care in Colorado and urge you to vote yes for the following reasons:

- The COVID-19 pandemic has had profound effects on patients and their ability to get the care they need. Since the onset of the pandemic, telehealth services have played an important role in helping to provide that much needed care in safe, effective ways. Out of necessity ophthalmologists, other physicians and the broader system rapidly scaled telehealth services to meet those needs. This bill helps to continue that momentum.
- Telehealth allows not just our patients in need of specific eye care, but all patients to easily, quickly and safely access necessary health care services. This is especially important for patients in rural areas who must drive long distances or those that have limited ability to get to in-person appointments. It cuts down on time away from work and family that would otherwise be spent traveling to and from appointments. This type of common-sense convenience is needed more than ever in today's health care systems.
- Telehealth services, including phone calls, should be reimbursed at the same rate as those services provided in-person. The same exam questions are asked, the same provider care is given thus we provide the same time, skills, and expertise as in-person visits.
- While we cannot do everything via telehealth, there are many ways physicians can use this important modality to care for patients. Having those options is key and that is why health plans should not be allowed to impose requirements or limitations on what technologies we can use to deliver telehealth services.

We respectfully urge you to vote to support the passage of this important legislation as a way to continue to ensure access to quality, safe and cost-effective care for Coloradans.

Thank you for your consideration and your yes vote on SB20-212.

Warm regards,

Rebecca Braverman, MD  
President





June 2, 2020

Senate State, Veterans, & Military Affairs Committee  
200 E Colfax Avenue  
Denver, Colorado 80203  
Via Email: RE: Senate Bill 20-212

Honorable Members of the Senate State, Veterans, & Military Affairs Committee:

Colorado Hospital Association (CHA) submits written testimony in support of Senate Bill (SB) 20-212, Reimbursement for Telehealth Services. CHA represents more than 100 hospitals and health systems in the state of Colorado and has a long history of supporting efforts to increase health care access.

This bill aims to extend the increased access to health care services delivered through telehealth, which is currently only permitted during the COVID-19 public health emergency, by requiring creating parity in reimbursement, expanding eligible provider types and growing the eligible technology platforms. The increased use of telehealth technologies has been crucial in slowing the spread of COVID-19 by protecting patients and health care workers, and health care services delivered through telehealth can provide more convenient, person-centered and cost-effective care for the future.

Telehealth technologies allow patients to access crucial health and behavioral health services regardless of geographic, transportation or other barriers. Through proactive management of chronic conditions and remote patient monitoring, health care services delivered through telehealth technologies can reduce acute episodes that may otherwise result in hospital stays and care in high-cost settings. Additionally, review of Medicaid data suggests Medicaid members are ready and willing to use telehealth services across multiple provider types and, though there is still work to be done to ensure access to telehealth capabilities for Native American and rural communities, this bill is an essential next step.

The Association thanks the bill sponsors for this important work to increase access and improve health outcomes. CHA urges Senate State, Veterans, & Military Affairs Committee members to support SB 20-212 and thanks committee members for consideration of this bill.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lila Cummings', is written over a horizontal line.

Lila Cummings  
Manager, Public Policy

As a Colorado resident, pediatric healthcare provider & tele-health user I wanted to advocate for telemedicine.

We have been able to provide critical developmental & therapy support to families and their children, even in the midst of a pandemic. We've provided teaching, resources and skilled therapy services (OT/PT/ST) via tele-health to our established patients as well as reach a huge population of at risk children who were previously excluded from services because of geographic/location limitations, or complex medical fragility limiting access to services outside the home or preventing clinicians from entering the home.

Tele-health allowed us to reach more kids & provide services that cannot be replicated by paper teaching or you-tube videos. We can support and engage the child and their families in real time- meeting their therapy and social/emotional needs in an unprecedented way. The success of telehealth cannot be understated.

Tele-medicine visits must stay available for families - without financial constraints designed to penalize or obstruct the process. Permitting individual insurance carriers to insist on provider specific platforms that are fee based would decrease and compromise patient access and benefits. Limiting access or types of visits for billing limitations impairs the patients access to a treatment modality that has demonstrable benefits.

The tele-health technology is a huge benefit to all Coloradans and has broad applications to decrease overall health costs while increasing health access and preventive maintenance care. Continuing to allow online supervisor visits ensures quality healthcare and therapy, allows for more interaction with the family in a safe and therapeutic way; and preventing private/commercial insurance agencies from charging to access the insurance specific platforms/systems improves the medical outcomes by not limiting or restricting the patients access to the best care for the situation.

Telehealth provides a flexibility that cannot be matched and should be available for all to access as covered benefit without financial barriers that benefit the insurance companies.



Telehealth Written Testimony

June 2, 2020

Members of the Senate State, Veterans, & Military Affairs Committee  
Colorado State Capitol  
200 E. Colfax Ave  
Denver, CO 80203

RE: Written testimony in support of SB20-212 Reimbursement for Telehealth Services

Honorable Members of the Senate State, Veterans, & Military Affairs Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of SB20-212 Reimbursement for Telehealth Services on behalf of the Colorado Medical Society. We believe this legislation and increasing access to telehealth is a crucial step toward making health care more affordable and accessible for all Coloradans. We urge your yes vote on this bill for the following reasons:

- As frontline physicians, we have seen firsthand the impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on patients and their families. At the same time, we have seen through the increased necessity of use, the benefits of telehealth for our patients. While COVID-19 has had profound effects, our resolve to provide high-quality, cost-effective care to Coloradans has not diminished and the ability to continue to provide telehealth is essential to these goals.
- During the current public health emergency, telehealth allowed for the safe continuation of care. We must assure the benefits which exist from telehealth and which have been highlighted during this emergency of access to timely, high-quality, safe and cost-effective care are not lost for Coloradans.
- For rural, underserved, mobility-impaired patients, or those seeking care from specialists who are often a scarce resource, telehealth increases or even creates access where there was none before.
- Demand for telehealth surged 50% nationwide in March alone. ([CNBC](#)) Results from a soon-to-be-released House of Medicine poll will show that a third of Colorado physicians ramped up existing telehealth services and two-thirds of physicians started new telehealth services to meet growing demand. Patients and providers alike have come to see how telehealth allows individuals to better access care and patients will continue to demand this kind of access.
- Telehealth reduces the cost of care – minimizing or entirely eliminating transportation and patient care costs. Telehealth also increases health care efficiency and enhances the physician-patient relationship through more timely, consistent access and increased convenience.
- Services rendered via telehealth should be reimbursed at the same rate as those services provided in-person. They require the same time, skill, and expertise as in-person visits and health care professionals are providing the same level of care during these telehealth visits. Providers, who have invested in implementing new telemedicine systems, need to

be reimbursed adequately in order to enable them to continue to provide these valuable services.

- By allowing easier access to both timely care and specialty care, telehealth has the potential to reduce the overall costs of care by reducing emergency and urgent care visits and limiting the need for diagnostic procedures. As such we need to continue this enhanced use by ensuring payment parity with in-person visits.
- It is important that carriers not be able to impose requirements or limitations on what technologies providers can use to deliver telehealth services, as such carrier-specific restrictions only increase the cost of providing care and discourage use.

Enhanced access to safe, quality and cost-effective care, especially for our most vulnerable patients is one of the few silver linings of the COVID-19 public health emergency. The legislature has an opportunity to codify these positive changes at a time when patients across the state are learning its merits and will continue to demand its offering.

Thank you for your consideration and your yes vote on SB20-212.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "David Markenson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

David Markenson, MD, MBA  
CMS President



June 2, 2020

To Whom It May Concern:

I wanted to reach out to you about the importance of protecting telehealth access for Coloradoans. I know The Home Care and Hospice Association of Colorado has been working hard to be in touch with you as a legislator to stress the importance of it, but I wanted to reach out as an individual, as well. Access to telehealth is such an important piece in the fight against COVID-19 (and other illnesses, as well). My coworkers and I are all able to keep our jobs and keep treating children because we can treat and work from the safety of our homes. This helps prevent the spread of COVID19, which ultimately saves lives and helps prevent undue suffering. Telehealth is also even more important for our medical fragile children and any elderly family members, as well- they are able to still receive care while remaining protected at home.

Because of telehealth, my co-workers have been able to safely keep treating our State's children with therapy needs and keep them making amazing progress into becoming their own best selves. This therapy now sets them up for literally the rest of their lives- when we help children learn how to speak and communicate, when we teach them how to ask for help and to advocate for their desires and needs, when we help them learn how to walk effectively and move their bodies in space, when we teach them how to interact with their peers safely and happily- all of these are skills that impact the rest of their lives. The therapists in my company have many stories of success that are being shared at a legislative level, but I can tell you how heartwarming it has been to get to hear the stories they share: stories of children feeding themselves for the first time, successfully using language to communicate with their families. It's been a wonderful positive thing to see in these incredibly trying times.

Additionally, due to telehealth, I have been able to keep my job during this unprecedented time. I have been able to support myself and my family and have not had to worry about losing my job and having to use State resources to continue to be able to meet my basic human needs. I cannot



stress enough this impact that this has had on my mental health- feeling secure that I will be able to pay my bills, buy food, buy medicine, and pay for medical care.

All of this success is because of the temporary allowing for telehealth. It is so vital that this temporary access become permanent access. We know that the science is indicating that COVID 19 may be around for a long time, and having telehealth is an important weapon in the fight for lives and safety. Please continue to allow for access to telehealth for Coloradoans. It is vital for keeping citizens safe and healthy, and helping Colorado prepare for an uncertain future.

Thank you for your consideration of my testimony:

Jordyn Amstutz





June 1, 2020

Dear Senate State Affairs Committee Members,

The Colorado Pharmacists Society (CPS) represents the profession of pharmacy across all practice settings in Colorado. We are the only non-profit professional pharmacist's association in the State. It is our mission to optimize patient care and public health.

We support SB 20-212 because pharmacists in clinical settings already routinely provide telehealth to patients and have for many years. Pharmacists are embedded in outpatient primary care and specialty clinics across the state. In these ambulatory settings, pharmacists care for patients via both face-to-face and telehealth visits for a variety of chronic diseases (i.e., anticoagulation, hypertension, diabetes, and hypercholesterolemia) and for medication-related issues (polypharmacy, adherence, etc.). Pharmacist visits are utilized by medical home models to manage patients and free up other providers to care for more urgent needs, thereby increasing access to care in busy healthcare settings. By utilizing us to practice at our fully trained and educated level and scope, pharmacist-provided care has been proven to provide patients with chronic diseases a higher quality of care at a lower overall cost.

I work in a family medicine clinic myself, and the physicians refer patients to me to manage their high blood pressure and diabetes. I conduct ALL of my patient interactions via telehealth visits. The virtues of the telehealth model are undeniable, so the payment to qualified providers must have parity as well.

We thank the sponsors of SB 212 for including all providers in the privately insured model. We additionally beseech further considerations for Colorado Medicaid to include payment to all telehealth providers, including pharmacists. As we know, approximately 1/3 of Coloradans are insured via Medicaid, and this is unfortunately only going to increase with the COVID19 pandemic. Pharmacists would undoubtedly save the state money if included as an eligible provider.

Thank you for your consideration, and the Colorado Pharmacists Society requests your YES vote on SB 20-212.

Sincerely,

**Emily Zadvorny, PharmD, BCPS**

Executive Director, Colorado Pharmacists Society

[Emily.Zadvorny@cuanschutz.edu](mailto:Emily.Zadvorny@cuanschutz.edu)

303-818-9045

**Executive Director**

Emily Zadvorny, PharmD, BCPS

**President**

Gina Moore, PharmD, MBA

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CHP  
*Member At Large*

Margie Hamm, CPhT  
*Technician Member At Large*

TO: Senate State, Veterans and Military Affairs Committee; June 2, 2020

Members of the Committee:

I am Brenda Haaksma. I am a licensed speech and language pathologist and own Haaksma Speech Pathology with headquarters in Parker. My company is a licensed home care agency and independent therapy private practice that I founded in 2009. I request your **support of Senate Bill 20-212** regarding reimbursement for health care services provided through telehealth and telemedicine. And I request that "SPEECH THERAPY" be added to the bill on line 2 of page 7.

My company employs 40 licensed speech-language pathologists, physical therapists, occupational therapists, and nurses. We provide health care services primarily to medically fragile children ages (birth to 21) who receive services in their own homes located in eight counties from Pueblo to Boulder.

Since the onset of COVID-19, our dedicated healthcare team has been able to continue and to be reimbursed to provide services to our clients via telemedicine. Several important observations I have made in this endeavor have been the following:

- 1) Therapists are experiencing greater family involvement and consistency** with increased carryover of interventions outside of the actual therapy sessions. This is significant, in that children are making more progress because their parents/caregivers are being more active in the therapy sessions.
- 2) Telemedicine visits require more preparation and energy than an in-person visit because each session is a very intense 45 to 60 minute interaction** where we are holding the client's attention without down time and where we have less control over the environment. This can prove especially challenging when working with a toddler or preschooler!
- 3) Telemedicine has allowed us to continue to care for children that are themselves immunocompromised** and those who have others in the home that are immunocompromised.
- 4) Telemedicine has allowed us to reach patients in more rural areas;** and
- 5) Telemedicine has helped us realize that some patients respond more favorably to the therapy process through telemedicine.**

Many of the clients we serve have significant medical conditions such as autism or cerebral palsy. As such, they require support and intervention in many different areas, such as communication, feeding, and swallowing, activities of daily living, mobility, sensory integration, augmentative communication, adaptive equipment, neuro-developmental training, and early intervention services.

We want to continue to provide and be reimbursed for health care provided via telehealth and telemedicine. Please support SB 20-212.

-- Brenda Haaksma, SLP, 11479 S. Pine Drive, #1, Parker, CO 80134 – 303-919-6799

**Testimony from the Colorado Rural Health Center in Support of:  
SB20-212 Reimbursement for Telehealth Services**

**Senate, State Affairs Committee, June 2, 2020**

Mister Chair and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on behalf of the Colorado Rural Health Center (CRHC). CRHC is the nonprofit, nonpartisan State Office of Rural Health and Rural Health Association. Our members are hospitals, clinics, providers and communities in rural Colorado. We provide resources, education and advocacy to ensure that all rural Coloradans have access to comprehensive, affordable, high quality healthcare. CRHC is writing to ask for your support of SB20-212 Reimbursement for Telehealth Services.

750,230 Coloradans live in a rural or frontier county, and of Colorado's 64 counties, 73% are frontier or rural. Recent research suggests that where people live significantly impacts health outcomes. Real differences exist between urban and rural areas of the state, and rural citizens face a variety of health inequities. Poverty and unemployment rates are higher in rural counties with median household income 29% lower in rural areas compared to urban areas. Residents on public insurance is 32% higher in rural areas and those who are uninsured is 11.4% compared to 6.7% in urban Colorado. These factors are social determinants of health that manifest themselves in poorer health rankings and higher chronic disease prevalence. These health and economic factors are increasingly more critical due to the COVID-19 public health emergency (PHE) and subsequent economic downturn.

Luckily, in the wake of COVID-19, the state passed emergency provisions to make telehealth services more widely available. Telehealth services are vital in order for rural Coloradans to receive timely, affordable and quality healthcare. This bill keeps patients and healthcare workers safe and promotes convenient, personalized care. Rural healthcare providers across the state are using telehealth for variety of services, including:

- Primary care visits, especially for those at high-risk for COVID-19 complications

- Oncology
- Therapy and counseling
- Stroke assessment
- Home health
- Infectious disease control
- Chronic pain visits
- Visits with long-term care residents

It is critical we continue this momentum of supporting telehealth by supporting this bill. CRHC and our membership can empathize and understand the dire financial situation the state is facing, but if we do not provide equitable access to healthcare across our state by protecting telehealth services, rural Coloradans who already have poorer socioeconomic and health outcomes, will be the ones who continue to lose out.

Our rural healthcare providers have given us some thoughtful feedback about delivering telehealth services in the wake of COVID-19:

- *“We are hoping the relaxed rules stay in place after the COVID restrictions are lifted. It is an enormous benefit to our patients that live out of town and travel sometimes an hour to get to the office. We see less stress on our staff with the televisits, our furniture and equipment.”*—Peak Family Medicine, Montrose
- *“Our providers and patients have adapted well. We foresee some patients wanting to stay with telehealth (psych and neurology) because they don’t like coming into the clinic. We really need phone visits to pay equally as an audio/video visit when the note is comparable to an E/M visit.”*—Heart of the Rockies Regional Medical Center, Salida
- *“[Telehealth] is a work in progress as we serve a large elderly population in a rural area. It is a great option to help ensure patient and staff safety during this pandemic.”*—Spanish Peaks Regional Medical Center, Walsenburg

- *“We are hoping to integrate telehealth services for the long term.” –Melissa Memorial Hospital, Holyoke*
- *“We have been lucky that the majority of patients have been open and comfortable to with telemedicine. It’s just a question of will we get paid or not. Again, we are lucky we have the majority of Medicaid patients and Medicaid is paying and doing well on this end. We are trying to think out of the box and keep revenue coming in plus provide the same great services when patients need us. As well as keeping staff healthy and safe.” –Pediatric Associates, Durango*
- *“We only started [offering telehealth services] due to COVID out of necessity. Looking forward to seeing its potential going forward.” -Custer County Medical Center, Westcliffe*
- *“[Telehealth revenue] is not a lot but at least it’s something and gives our patients options.” – Yuma District Hospital*

Please support safe, comprehensive access to telehealth services by voting yes on this bill.

Thank you the opportunity to provide testimony on this issue, for your consideration on this bill and for your support to rural Colorado communities. We are happy to answer any questions or continue this conversation, please contact Policy & Advocacy Manager Kelly Erb at [ke@coruralhealth.org](mailto:ke@coruralhealth.org) or by phone at 507.828.4174.

Thank you.



**DENVER HEALTH™**

est. 1860

**FOR LIFE'S JOURNEY**

Colorado General Assembly  
Senate State, Veterans, & Military Affairs Committee  
200 East Colfax Ave  
Denver, CO 80203

June 2, 2020

Re: Denver Health Testimony for Senate Bill 20-212: Concerning Reimbursement for Health Care Services Provided Through Telehealth

Denver Health and Hospital Authority is a comprehensive, integrated organization, providing hospital and emergency care to the public, regardless of ability to pay. Our integrated system promotes continuity of care for each patient and assures health care is delivered in the most efficient and cost-effective setting.

As Colorado's primary safety-net institution, Denver Health cares for the needs of all, including many special populations such as the poor, uninsured, pregnant teens, persons addicted to alcohol and other substances, victims of violence and the homeless.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, an estimated 73% of adult and primary care visits at Denver Health are being conducted remotely. Some visits are successfully provided on the telephone as video platforms may have barriers to translation and our patient population may not have access to necessary technology. Denver Health has created an efficient triage system to identify which patients need to come into the hospital or a doctor's office for a physical visit and which can be effectively treated remotely.

We do believe that guardrails should be placed on the use of telephone telehealth services to ensure these services are being used appropriately and reimbursed fairly, however, we do not support restricting or denying services based solely on the communication technology.

We respectfully ask that you support HB 20-212 so that we may continue to care for our community while improving accessibility and reducing costs for our patient population through the use of telehealth services.

Sincerely,

Lisa Ward  
Government Affairs Specialist  
Government & Community Relations  
Denver Health Hospital and Authority



**DENVER HEALTH™**

— est. 1860 —

**FOR LIFE'S JOURNEY**



6/2/2020

Dear Members of the Senate State, Veterans, & Military Affairs Committee,

I am submitting this testimony in support of SB20-212 Concerning Reimbursement for Health Care Services Provided through Telehealth, on behalf of Colorado Community Health Network, the membership association for Colorado's Federally Qualified Health Centers, also known as Community Health Centers (CHCs).

Colorado has 20 CHCs with more than 200 clinic sites across the state. CHCs are the health care home to more than 830,000 Coloradans from 63 of the state's 64 counties. CHCs provide integrated primary care – which means they offer physical health care integrated with behavioral health and oral health care in the same setting. CHCs serve people regardless of their ability to pay; 93% of patients served by CHCs are very low income, and many face transportation and work barriers that make it difficult to get to a CHC to see a provider.

As we have seen during this public health crisis, telemedicine is an extremely efficient way to provide care to patients and their families, some of whom would not otherwise be able to receive it. While telemedicine is playing an important role in keeping our patients safe during the COVID-19 pandemic, its benefits extend far beyond this outbreak. SB20-212 is an important step in ensuring that CHCs and other health care providers can continue to provide telemedicine services to Colorado's most underserved communities now and in the future.

This bill would allow providers, including CHCs, to be reimbursed for certain health services provided via telemedicine. This will help keep patients and providers safe during this time and in any future outbreaks, as well as ensure access to needed health care for people who cannot travel to a clinic. While CHCs can temporarily provide telemedicine thanks to HCPF's emergency rule enacted in March, CHCs and other Colorado health care providers need a long-term solution to provide telemedicine services in years to come. To be clear, we are not requesting these changes to generate new revenue or to increase reimbursement for our providers; we are proposing these changes to ensure access to primary care that is convenient and safe for patients and providers.

I urge you to support this bill and the future of telemedicine in Colorado. Thank you for your time, and your support of CHCs and their patients.

Thank you,

Stephanie Brooks  
Policy Director  
Colorado Community Health Network

Colorado Community Health Network is the state association for Colorado's 21 Community Health Centers which provide integrated primary care at more than 200 clinic sites across Colorado:

- **Axis Health System's Integrated Healthcare Clinics** - serving La Plata and Montezuma, Dolores, and San Miguel counties
- **Clinica Family Health** - serving Adams, Boulder, and Broomfield counties
- **Clínica Tepeyac** - serving Denver, Adams, and Arapahoe counties, and neighboring communities
- **Colorado Coalition for the Homeless - Stout Street Health Center** - serving the Colorado community
- **Denver Health's Community Health Services** - serving City and County of Denver
- **High Plains Community Health Center** - serving Prowers, Baca, Cheyenne, Kiowa, and Kit Carson counties
- **Inner City Health Center** - serving City and County of Denver
- **MarillacHealth** - serving Mesa County and neighboring communities
- **Mountain Family Health Centers** - serving Garfield, Eagle, Pitkin, and Rio Blanco counties
- **Northwest Colorado Health** - serving Moffat and Routt counties
- **Peak Vista Community Health Centers** - serving El Paso, Adams, Arapahoe, Douglas, Elbert, Kit Carson, Lincoln, Park, and Teller counties
- **Pueblo Community Health Center, Inc.** - serving Pueblo and Huerfano counties
- **River Valley Family Health Center** - serving Montrose and Delta counties
- **Salud Family Health Centers** - serving Weld, Adams, Boulder, Larimer, Las Animas, Logan, Morgan, Sedgwick, Phillips, Washington, and Yuma counties
- **Sheridan Health Services** - serving Arapahoe, Adams, Denver, and Jefferson counties
- **STRIDE Community Health Center** - serving Arapahoe, Adams, Douglas, Jefferson, and Park counties
- **Summit Community Care Clinic** - serving Summit County and neighboring communities
- **Sunrise Community Health** - serving Weld and Larimer counties
- **Uncompahgre Medical Center** - serving San Miguel, Montrose, and Ouray counties
- **Valley-Wide Health Systems, Inc.** - serving Alamosa, Bent, Cheyenne, Conejos, Costilla, Crowley, Delta, Fremont, Garfield, Kit Carson, Mesa, Mineral, Otero, Rio Grande, and Saguache counties



6/2/2020

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This bill would allow providers, including CHCs, to be reimbursed for certain health services provided via telemedicine. This will help keep patients and providers safe during this time and in any future outbreaks, as well as ensure access to needed health care for people who cannot travel to a clinic. While CHCs can temporarily provide telemedicine thanks to HCPF's emergency rule enacted in March, CHCs and other Colorado health care providers need a long-term solution to provide telemedicine services in years to come. To be clear, we are not requesting these changes to generate new revenue or to increase reimbursement for our providers; we are proposing these changes to ensure access to primary care that is convenient and safe for patients and providers.

I urge you to support this bill and the future of telemedicine in Colorado. Thank you for your time, and your support of CHCs and their patients.

Thank you,

Stephanie Brooks  
Policy Director  
Colorado Community Health Network

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June 2,2020

Member of the Senate State Affairs Committee

RE:SB20-212

My name is Meghan Weber and I'm a Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant. I work for Solace Pediatric Home Healthcare and serve clients in the Denver Metro area. Our company switched solely to telehealth on March 13th, 2020 in response to COVID-19 and I am currently providing telehealth occupational therapy services for all of my caseload.

Our company made the decision to move to telehealth services to protect our clients, their families and their clinicians because we are in multiple homes in a day. How has this impacted families? It has empowered caregivers to really understand and learn occupational therapy strategies to increase independence in their children's activities of daily living. Families are more hands on than ever because I need them. I need caregivers to be my eyes, ears and hands! I have families who are thriving over telehealth and making great progress toward their goals. I have children who are more excited to see me on their tablet than they were in person! Children love technology! It increases engagement, more opportunities to be creative in implementing strategies and more buy in from the caregiver because their children are excited.

Telehealth has also provided more opportunities for collaboration between disciplines. With the flexibility in our schedules clinicians now have more opportunity to provide co-treats or times to chat about our shared clients. This collaboration provides a more holistic approach for our clients and providing the best care possible.

This service model has also provided more flexibility to meet families where they are at. If one of my families has a missed session, it is now easier to reschedule within the week rather than finding an opening a few weeks down the road. Clinicians can be more flexible with session times for make up visits due to not having drive time or the location of other clients on my caseload. Telehealth has opened up the opportunity for our company to provide services to children in rural areas who have not had access to therapy in the past due to where they live in the state of Colorado.

Providing service via telehealth during the pandemic has taught me many things but the most important lesson I've learned is that our families needed us now more than ever and I am so grateful we had a way to support them through this difficult time without compromising their health & safety.

Thank you for supporting SB20- 212.  
Sincerely, Meghan Weber, COTA/L

 Telehealth testimony

I am a pediatric speech language pathology and provider of speech and feeding therapy services. Before I was a skeptic, and after 11 weeks of switching to this service deliver method, now I am a believer, witnessing children make progress in nearly every telehealth therapy session.

During the pandemic, ~90% of children, ranging from 2 years old to 8 years old, and their parents on my caseload opted in to continue to receive professional skilled therapy intervention through telehealth. Following all HIPAA and additional compliance laws through our telehealth platform, I have witnessed first hand how this service delivery method has been of equal and sometimes better quality in achieving improved speech and language outcomes. I have children meeting goals and acquiring new speech and language skills faster, paying attention for longer, and parents more engaged and actively carrying over the clinical recommendations I make.

Even when the pandemic ends, I have families requesting this method of delivery as they have seen the benefits in their child's development. I am able to serve more children, reduce overhead costs and be more efficient and effective. It is helping keep patients and health care workers safe, helps patients stay connected to their provider and results in more convenient, personalized and cost-effective care.

Lowering health care costs is a top priority, and telehealth saves money. Please support the continued use of telehealth. This innovation is good for patients, taxpayers and caregivers.

Sincerely,  
Erin

