



HOUSE COMMERCE AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

April 3, 2018

HB 1471-FN

Relative to Telemedicine

Testimony

Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. My name is Paula Minnehan, VP, State Government Relations with the New Hampshire Hospital Association (NHHA), representing all 26 of the state's community hospitals as well as all of our specialty hospitals.

The NHHA supports HB 1471 and we appreciate the sponsors introducing this legislation to clarify the law relative to telemedicine.

Hospitals in New Hampshire have been utilizing telemedicine technology for a number of years, and patients in New Hampshire have benefited as a result due to an increase in access to care and efficiencies in the delivery of care. Historically, telemedicine was first employed in the rural areas of the state to bring scarce specialty services to the North Country, such as dermatology, psychiatry and radiology. Since the early inception of the technology, all hospitals utilize some form of telemedicine as part of their care support for their patients and the communities they serve.

The modifications to the current telemedicine law in HB 1471 provides more consistency with standard practice in the health care industry relative to the recognition of the growing technology and improvements in access to care by recognizing both the distant and local providers involved in a patient's care.

Medicare, which is the largest payer of health care services nationally, covers telehealth services and pays for the services. The Medicare provider manual states that payment for "distant site practitioners" (where the expert physician or practitioner is physically located at the time of telemedicine encounter) is equal to what would have been paid without the use of telemedicine.

The bill before you would help to ensure more consistent and appropriate benefit coverage for telemedicine in New Hampshire. We are supportive of the changes made to the bill to add a study committee to review reimbursement for telemedicine and telehealth. We urge you to pass HB 1471-FN.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide our comments. I'd be happy to answer any questions.