



HOUSE HEALTH, HUMAN SERVICES AND ELDERLY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

April 24, 2019

SB 258 – Relative to Telemedicine and Telehealth Services

Testimony

Good afternoon, Madam Chair and members of the committee. My name is Paula Minnehan, Senior VP, State Government Relations for the New Hampshire Hospital Association (NHHA), and I am here representing all 26 of our state's community hospitals as well as all specialty hospitals.

NHHA supports SB 278 and we thank the sponsors for introducing this legislation. We also appreciate the Department of Health and Human Services' commitment to addressing the current limitations related to telemedicine and telehealth under Medicaid. The bill adds definition and clarifies the statute for Medicaid coverage for telemedicine and telehealth services.

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. I have attached some information that I shared last summer with the Committee to Study Health Care Reimbursement for Telemedicine and Telehealth. The data, while a bit dated (2016), remains instructive relative to how hospitals in New Hampshire are utilizing telehealth in their institutions or outpatient practices.

I have also attached a report from the American Hospital Association (AHA) Center for Health Innovation entitled *"Telehealth – A Path to Virtual Integrated Care"*. It is an excellent report that examines how telehealth is part of a digital-health revolution, the flexibility afforded to practitioners to support the move towards integrated care, why telehealth is critical to health care transformation, the current state of telehealth, opportunities for growth of telehealth in hospitals and most importantly, how hospitals and health systems can build capacity to expand access, improve outcomes and reduce costs.

We believe SB 278 supports these goals for hospitals in New Hampshire and we strongly support the bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide our comments. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.