



200 East State Street
Alliance, OH 44601
330.596.6000
www.achosp.org

AFFILIATED WITH:
Alliance Hospice
Alliance Visiting Nurse Association
Caring Hands, Inc.
Community Care Center
DASCO Home Medical Equipment Co.

April 27, 2017

Written Testimony by Carl J Foster MD MBA
to the House Finance Committee in Support of Telemedicine Reimbursement Policy
included in Sub-HB 49, Main Operating Budget

Chairman Smith, Vice Chair Ryan and Ranking Member Cera my name is Carl Foster, M.D. MBA and I am an anesthesiologist. I currently work at Alliance Community Hospital in Alliance, Ohio where I am President of the Medical Staff. I am also President of the Stark County Medical Society. I am writing to emphasize my support for the coverage of telemedicine services language included in the substitute version of HB 49 the FY18-19 budget.

Telemedicine, a key innovation in support of health care delivery reform, is being used in initiatives to improve access to care, care coordination and quality, as well as reduce the rate of growth in health care spending. These initiatives offer a promising avenue to expand service delivery for primary care providers and decrease economic barriers to accessing primary care, particularly for patients who find travel difficult, institutionalized patients, and patients that live in medically underserved areas.

The state of Ohio is currently behind 30 other states who have passed laws providing reimbursement for telemedicine services. Those states have payment parity between telemedicine services and in-office services. The language included in sub-HB 49 aligns Ohio with these other states by requiring a health benefit plan to cover telemedicine services on the same basis and to the same extent that the plan covers in-person health services. It also prohibits a health benefit plan from imposing any annual or lifetime benefit for telemedicine services other than a benefit maximum imposed on all benefits offered under then plan. In addition, the bill will prohibit a health benefit plan from excluding coverage for a service solely because it is a telemedicine service.

We must provide opportunities for telemedicine reimbursement if we want to see the potential growth opportunities that telemedicine services can provide. With this language inclusion, physicians in Ohio will have more avenues to provide access to patients, coordinate care, and improve health outcomes.

The Stark County Medical society applauds your efforts to ensure that telemedicine in Ohio can be fully utilized and barriers to access to care are removed.

Sincerely,

Carl J. Foster, M.D., MBA
Medical Staff President

CJF/ctd