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Written Testimony

Senate Finance Committee

in Support of Telemedicine Reimbursement Policy – With Modifications
included in Sub-HB 49, Main Operating Budget

May 24, 2017

Chairman Hackett, Vice-Chair Tavares, my name is Maria Johar and I am the Medical Director for Telemedicine at ProMedica; a not-for-profit, mission based health system serving northwest Ohio. I am writing to emphasize my support for the coverage of telemedicine services language – with modifications – that was 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. Telemedicine should require both video and audio to be present to ensure the highest quality of care for our patients. Provision for education to our patients to ensure optimal usage will address the triple aim, of increased access, improved quality and lower cost.

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 due to a variety of personal factors, including living in rural areas, residing in nursing or assisted living homes or are from medically underserved areas.

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.

ProMedica urges your support of this legislation to ensure that telemedicine in Ohio can be fully utilized and barriers to access to care are removed.