



April 11, 2019

The Honorable Mark Romanchuk  
Chair, House Finance: Health and Human Services Subcommittee  
77 S. High Street  
11<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Dear Chairman Romanchuk:

As the President of the Academy of Medicine of Cleveland & Northern Ohio (AMCNO), an organization representing more than 5,000 physicians, residents and medical students in the Northern Ohio region, I am writing to you on behalf of the AMCNO to express our support of the Telemedicine Coverage Policy included in HB 166, Main Operating Budget.

Telemedicine is a key innovation in health care delivery, and is being used in initiatives to improve access to care, to facilitate coordination and quality, and to reduce the rate of growth in health care spending. This offers a promising avenue to expand service delivery for primary care providers and decrease economic barriers to accessing primary care, particularly for institution-alized patients, for those who find travel to an office difficult, and for patients who live in medi-cally underserved areas.

The state of Ohio is currently behind 35 other states which have passed laws providing coverage for telemedicine services. These states have laws in place regarding coverage and/or payment between telemedicine services and in-office services. The language included in HB 166 aligns Ohio with several other states by requiring a health benefit plan to cover telemedicine services to the same extent that the plan covers in-person health care. It also prohibits a health benefit plan from imposing any annual or cumulative lifetime benefit for telemedicine services other than participation in a "benefit maximum" imposed on all benefits offered under that plan. In addition, the bill will prohibit a health benefit plan from excluding coverage for a service solely because it is a telemedicine service.

It should be noted that coverage parity is different from pay parity and the included language in HB 166 only deals with coverage parity. The language as is will still require a provider to negotiate a reimbursement rate directly with the insurer.

The appropriate use of telemedicine can greatly improve access to quality care, strengthen the patient-physician relationship and improve access for patients with chronic conditions who may have limited access to care.

*The Voice of Physicians in Northern Ohio*

The AMCNO applauds the efforts of the Administration to include this language and ask the House to keep the language in the bill. Your efforts will ensure that telemedicine in Ohio can be fully utilized and that barriers to access to care continue to be removed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Bruce Cameron". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

R. Bruce Cameron, MD  
President  
AMCNO

Cc: Members of the House Finance: Health and Human Services Subcommittee