



MEMORANDUM

Representative Mark Fraizer

71st House District

Chairman Brinkman, Vice Chairman Antani, Ranking Member Boggs, members of the House Insurance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today on House Bill 679. House Bill 679 seeks to expand the number of Telehealth services available to Ohioans and those from other states seeking medical care from Ohio providers.

The health community has seen exponential growth this year of Telehealth services due to the accessibility of technology, the need due to Covid-19 concerns, and the convenience of receiving medical services without leaving one's home. This trend has been seen across the nation as doctors, physicians, social workers, and many more health professionals can perform their practice via video conferencing, e-mail or phone calls. Other states have similar legislation in order to keep up to date with the evolving medical systems providers are using. Specifically in Ohio, the growth in telemedicine has been astronomical and it is essential to appropriately regulate this service to encourage its adoption, utilization, and expansion. We also want to ensure the most vulnerable of our population are protected to ensure they receive appropriate accommodations for health services.

The focus of this bill is to define the practitioners, services, security, communication types, and reimbursement standards to encourage this service by defining these items. We will also enable flexibility to enable services to be rendered across state lines (as other states are able to perform in Ohio), in-person stipulations to ensure appropriate medical analysis, and provides guidance for pandemic circumstances like we see now.

One contingency in this bill requires those with a physical or mental disability to be allowed to have a caregiver with them at the time of receiving services. This is required to alleviate any stress that may be endured while receiving treatment that we have seen appear during this pandemic with those with development and/or physical disabilities struggling to receive appropriate treatment.

While not everyone is open to receiving medical services over the phone or internet, the services are already here, and they need to be appropriately regulated and encouraged. Each medical board in Ohio has already set their own rules regarding what services are allowed to be performed in their respective fields. The departments of Insurance and Medicaid have also set their own rules for which telehealth services will be reimbursable. The state of Ohio needs consistency across the

State to ensure anyone who would like to take advantage of telemedicine has the opportunity to do so, with as much ease as possible for as many services as appropriate.

With the safeguards that are laid out in this bill, providers will have the ability to offer telehealth without risking the safety of their patients' information or their well-being. I hope this committee will support this measure as we move Ohio forward with this straight-forward legislation.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill 679. I am happy to answer any questions you might have at this time.