

## Ohio General Assembly

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## Committees

Aging and Long-  
Term Care  
Commerce and  
Labor  
Insurance  
Ways and Means

## Mark D. Fraizer

State Representative, District 71

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Thank you Chairman Hackett, Vice Chairman Hottinger, Ranking Member Craig and members of Senate Insurance and Financial institutions for hearing HB 679, the Telehealth Expansion Act.

The health community has seen exponential growth and usage of Telehealth services due to Covid-19 concerns, access to technology, 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 other medical 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, telemedicine has become so prolific that it is essential to appropriately regulate this service, and encourage its adoption. We also want to ensure the most vulnerable of our population are protected and receive accommodating health services.

The focus of this bill is to define the practitioners, services, communication types, and reimbursement standards associated with telehealth. This legislation also enables flexibility for services to be rendered across state lines (as other states are able to perform in Ohio), in-person meeting stipulations, and provides guidance for pandemic circumstances.

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

While not everyone is open to receiving medical services over the phone or internet, the services already exist, and must be appropriately regulated. 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 telehealth reimbursement standards and regulations. The state of Ohio needs consistency to ensure those wanting take advantage of telemedicine have the opportunity to do so, with as much ease as possible.

Once again, thank you Chairman Hackett, Vice Chairman Hottinger, Ranking Member Craig, and members of senate Insurance and Financial Institutions. Representative Holmes and I would be happy to take any questions.