

Thank you, Mr. Chairman,

HB 679 will enable our exceptional healthcare providers to fully utilize modern telecommunications systems to care for patients both in and outside Ohio. In doing so, this bill will improve public health and lower healthcare costs.

House Bill 679 will do three things. First, expand the list of providers that can provide Telehealth services to include specialties such as psychologists, physical therapists, dietitians, social workers, audiologists, speech-language pathologists, and many licensed counselors. It will also extend the definition of telehealth services to include emails and phone calls in addition to virtual visits. This will make providers more accessible to patients, incentivize continuous provider-patient communication, and cut down on the disruption to daily life that often comes with medical appointments. Both the provider and the patient must agree to a Telehealth service, and both have the ability to request an in-person appointment if they feel it is best.

Second, the bill provides clear regulations for protecting patient privacy. It requires providers offer secure video technologies and take steps to protect username and password information, as well as electronic communications between the provider and the patient.

Third, the bill sets procedures for reimbursing providers and ensures patients who elect to use telehealth services will see no changes in their out-of-pocket expenses. Any additional fees or costs incurred by providers offering telehealth services must be negotiated solely between the provider and the health plan. In regards to reimbursement, providers will also be reimbursed for services provided via email or phone call. This reimbursement will continue to be negotiated between health plans and providers.

At no point in our lifetimes has the need for quick access to quality care been so obvious. By passing House Bill 679 we can give all Ohioans greater access to physical and mental health

treatment, allow our providers to take full advantage of modern technology, and reduce the time and travel burden many Ohioans incur to seek medical assistance. And we can accomplish all of this without raising healthcare costs.

I would like to thank my joint sponsor, Representative Fraizer, for his hard work on this bill.

Sincerely,

Adam Holmes
Chief Executive Officer
Frueh Enterprises
Work: 740-588-0132
Cell: 813-310-4357