

OSPMR

Written Testimony by William S. Pease, M.D.

to the House Finance Committee

in Support of Telemedicine Reimbursement Policy

included in Sub-HB 49, Main Operating Budget

Thursday, April 27 2017

Chairman Smith, Vice Chair Ryan and Ranking Member Cera my name is Dr. William Pease and I am a practicing physician in Columbus and professor at Ohio State. I represent the Ohio Society of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (PM&R) and serve as its president. I am writing to emphasize my support for the coverage of telemedicine services language 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. 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, institutionalized patients, and patients that live in medically underserved areas.

My specialty of PM&R focuses on issues of disability and participation in society. Our patients with paralysis due to spinal cord injury and stroke (as examples) often travel to my office in Columbus from all over Ohio to access the unique specialty services that we offer. Telemedicine has been shown to reduce the number of trips such as these, which are a burden for those with impaired mobility. Easier access can provide earlier detection and treatment of problems that arise as complications of disabling conditions.

The state of Ohio lags behind 30 other states who have passed laws providing reimbursement for telemedicine services. Those states have payment parity between telemedicine services and in-office services. The language included in sub-HB 49 aligns Ohio with these other states by requiring a health benefit plan to cover telemedicine services on the same basis and to the same extent that the plan covers in-person health services. 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.

The Ohio Society of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation applauds your efforts to ensure that telemedicine in Ohio can be fully utilized and barriers to access to care are removed.

Respectfully,

William S. Pease, M.D., president, OSPMR