



May 14, 2018

The Honorable Stephen Huffman, Chairman
House Health Committee
77 S. High Street
12th Floor
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Re: HB 546

Dear Chairman Huffman:

I am writing today on behalf of the 5,000 physician, resident and medical student members of the Academy of Medicine of Cleveland & Northern Ohio (AMCNO) to offer our strong support for HB 546 - Telemedicine.

Telemedicine, a key innovation in support of healthcare 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 healthcare spending. These initiatives offer a promising avenue to expand service delivery for providers and decrease economic barriers to accessing primary care, particularly for patients who find travel difficult, reside in an institution, or live in medically underserved areas.

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 state of Ohio is currently behind 35 other states that have passed laws providing reimbursement for telemedicine services. The language included in HB 546 aligns Ohio with 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. The legislation does not mandate payment parity for telemedicine services and will allow health plans to negotiate rates for telemedicine services with physicians.

The AMCNO strongly supports HB 546 and we thank the committee for considering our comments on this important legislation.

Sincerely,

R. Bruce Cameron, MD
AMCNO President

Cc: Members of the House Health Committee

The Voice of Physicians in Northern Ohio