



**Statement of the  
Ohio State Medical Association and Ohio Dermatological Association  
to the House Health Committee**

**H.B. 546 – Prohibit Health Insurer Discrimination Involving Telemedicine**

**Presented by Timothy Chang, M.D.**

**May 16, 2018**

Chairman Huffman and members of the House Health Committee, my name is Dr. Timothy Chang and I am a board-certified dermatologist at MetroHealth in Cleveland and a Clinical Assistant Professor at Case Western Reserve, School of Medicine. I am here today to testify on behalf of Ohio State Medical Association and the Ohio Dermatological Association to emphasize support for HB 546, legislation that would require insurance coverage on telemedicine services.

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 to reduce the rate of growth in health care spending. These initiatives offer a promising avenue to expand service delivery for providers and decrease economic barriers to accessing care, particularly for patients who find travel difficult, institutionalized patients, and patients that live in medically underserved areas. My field of dermatology, which already faces access issues, especially in rural areas of the state, would benefit tremendously from having more access to telemedicine. As dermatologists, we can often provide effective care based upon images provided by patients. This can decrease both new and follow-up office visits and provide great time and costs savings for our patients. However, current regulations in the state of Ohio limit the use of telemedicine for dermatologists.

The state of Ohio is currently behind over 30 other states who have passed laws providing reimbursement or coverage for telemedicine services. HB 546 aligns Ohio with other states by requiring a health benefit plan to provide coverage for telemedicine services on the same basis and to the same extent that the plan covers in-person health services. It also prohibits a health benefit plan from imposing any annual or lifetime benefit for telemedicine services other than a benefit maximum imposed on all benefits offered under the plan.

Providers in Ohio stand ready to expand access to Ohioans through the use of telemedicine. We have the capacity and the technology to do so; the only lacking piece is the uncertainty

surrounding insurance coverage. There is no continuity across insurance providers as to what health care services they will provide telemedicine coverage to and to what extent. As providers we are unable to fully utilize all that telemedicine has to offer our patients until this important component piece is fixed.

We must provide insurance coverage for telemedicine services if we want to see the potential growth opportunities that telemedicine can provide. With this legislation, physicians in Ohio will have more avenues to provide access to patients, coordinate care, and improve health outcomes.

The Ohio State Medical Association and Ohio Dermatological Association thank Representative Patton for introducing this legislation and in doing so, aiming to ensure that telemedicine in Ohio can be fully utilized and barriers to access to care are removed. I am happy to answer any questions the committee members may have.