



House Bill 122
Senate Health Committee
Proponent Testimony
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OAAPN Reimbursement Committee Chair
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Chairman Huffman, Vice-Chair Antani, Ranking Member Antonio, and members of the Senate Health Committee, I am Bethany Parsell, Director At-Large for the Ohio Association of Advanced Practice Nurses (OAAPN), and Chair of OAAPN's Reimbursement Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 122, which would expand access to telehealth services across Ohio.

OAAPN represents the more than 16,000 Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs) licensed in Ohio and providing health care services across the four advanced practice specialties: certified registered nurse anesthetists, certified nurse practitioners, certified clinical nurse specialists, and certified nurse midwives. Our members provide care in all manner of health care settings, from large hospital systems to independent primary care offices, and across all geographic areas of the state, both rural and urban. During the pandemic, Ohio's APRNs have successfully utilized telehealth services to provide quality care to our patients and we appreciate the General Assembly's efforts to establish a permanent framework for this health care delivery system moving forward.

During the height of the pandemic, when in-person visits would have required patients to travel and potentially put themselves at risk of exposure, telehealth services made it possible for APRNs and other health care professionals to provide care to patients in a safe and effective manner. This experience has demonstrated the benefits that telehealth services can provide for patient care even outside the context of a health emergency.

Telehealth expands access to care by making it easier for patients to see their health care providers. For patients, telehealth decreases the physical barriers they face to attend an appointment and increases the ease of participation by removing the need to travel and allowing for a patient to receive care in the comfort of their home. In addition, telehealth helps to keep the personal and systemic costs of health care down. It can reduce costs for patients since they are not required to travel as frequently, and by making it easier for patients to receive regular health monitoring, telehealth promotes early intervention for health care concerns. Telehealth also allows for a streamlined process for providers to establish personalized health care services, further promoting improved health care outcomes for patients. The increased flexibility for patients and providers that telehealth offers is a key component in its potential to expand access to care, help reduce costs, and improve health care outcomes.

Another benefit of enactment of HB 122 is that Ohio will now have a permanent regulatory framework, similar to the one utilized during the pandemic. This framework will provide stability by codifying a structure that ensures consistency across providers and both public and private payers, while at the same time also allowing for flexibility in the delivery of care. We applaud the expansion of providers authorized in HB 122 to deliver telehealth services, including mental health and addiction services. And



we appreciate the General Assembly's efforts to provide an equitable and appropriate framework for insurance and Medicaid coverage of telehealth services.

I work in a rural area in Northwest Ohio. I serve patients both in an outpatient and inpatient setting at three different hospitals, two of which are critical access hospitals. I also round at local nursing homes and developmental center. When telehealth came available at the start of the pandemic we worked diligently to embrace this in our practice. Telehealth has increased access to healthcare for both our inpatients, outpatients, and patients in long term. Telehealth has also helped us decrease transportation costs to the hospital from facilities. Offering telehealth visits has also helped to decrease our no show visits and cancelled appointments because we can be more available to our patients.

To summarize, OAAPN believes that telehealth services provide many benefits for patient care. HB 122 establishes a regulatory framework and standard of care for telehealth delivery that will ensure that health care professionals will continue to be able to safely, efficiently, and effectively provide care for their patients. We urge favorable passage of HB 122.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of OAAPN in favor of HB 122 today. I'd be happy to answer any questions you may have.