

September 27, 2021

Dear Senator Huffman, Chairman and Members of the Ohio Senate Health Committee,

My name is Charlene York and I am a resident of Newark, Ohio. I am writing as a proponent for HB 122 regarding telehealth services. Having access to telehealth has been a major benefit to my family twice over the past year.

On Friday, March 13, 2020, my husband fell and seriously hurt his neck just when the COVID-19 pandemic was hitting Ohio hard. The following week the state shut down to curb the pandemic tide. Seeking medical help for my husband hampered his recovery immensely by the shutdown. At that time, we were living in a small town that did not have access to many options without going far. Our family doctor and his staff had to prepare safely to receive patients and those patients with COVID-19 was their priority. Hospital ERs and urgent cares were facing the same issues. It was several weeks when my husband was able to see our family doctor thus delaying the treatment needed. Had telehealth been in place with our then family doctor, my husband would have had his surgery done quicker. Later in the summer of 2020 the use of telehealth was becoming more acceptable. We were able to save time from work and travel by using this especially for routine checkups and follow ups.

Another example is regarding my sister with stage 4 cancer. Not having the telehealth option at the beginning of the pandemic was an extreme hardship. Because of her special cancer, she had to travel two hours each way to see her oncologist for checkups every 4-6 weeks. On those days her husband and she would have to take time off from their work thus losing a day's work for both. On several occasions her husband was not allow to come into the doctor's office with her for the appointment due to the pandemic. Her husband HAS BEEN with her on this 20 year plus battle and he has been her SUPPORT. They are a TEAM. Not having him in the same room took an emotional toll on both of them at those times. This past June she had a fall where she had three areas of broken bones. Surgeries were done and she is now on the road of recovery. She still needs to see her oncologist every 4-6 weeks. But now her oncologist and my sister are using telehealth for those appointments. Her husband can be with her. If telehealth was not in place these past few months. She would have had to travel via medical transport both ways of which health insurance would not pay for.

We NEED to make sure telehealth is available to all Ohioans.

Thank you.

Charlene York
Newark, Ohio