



Ohio Children's Alliance

Leading change for child and family service providers

Senate Health Committee

November 10, 2021

Proponent Testimony on H.B. 122

Chairman Huffman, Vice-Chair Antani, Ranking Member Antonio, and members of the Senate Health Committee, thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony on H.B. 122, *The Telemedicine Expansion Act*.

My name is Kate Rossman; I am the Policy and Communications Associate at the Ohio Children's Alliance. Founded in 1973, the Ohio Children's Alliance provides leadership for Ohio's at-risk children, families, and community agencies. Our membership is made up of 80 agencies across Ohio providing foster care and behavioral health services to over 100,000 children and families each year.

The bill before you, House Bill 122, would expand on the types of providers who may bill for telehealth services, adds new services that a provider may bill for and implements new ways in which providers can see patients across state borders.

COVID-19 has provided an unprecedented challenge to our member organizations. Community behavioral health providers are facing an ever-widening gap between an available workforce and children and families with serious mental health needs.

The Telemedicine Expansion Act is essential to our providers who face skyrocketing mental health referrals from all corners of the state, and even in adjacent states. Many of the provisions would continue temporary flexibilities that were put into place at the beginning of the pandemic, such as:

1. Expanding "telehealth" to include email and phone calls, not just a virtual visit, which is the existing law
2. Allowing Ohio providers to provide telehealth services to patients who live out of state
3. Providing liability protection to providers
4. Giving discretion to providers to require to see a patient in person instead of telehealth if the provider feels it is necessary

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These are essential as we move into a post-pandemic world where flexible, accessible healthcare delivery is expected. The past several months exhibit not just the demand for expanded telehealth services, but proof that it can be done well.

Chairman Huffman, Vice-Chair Antani, Ranking Member Antonio, and members of the Senate Health Committee, thank you again for the opportunity to testify on H.B. 122. Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Thank you,

Kate Rossman
Policy and Communications Associate
Ohio Children's Alliance
Kate.Rossman@ohiochildrensalliance.org

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