



June 24, 2020

Re: Continuation of Telemedicine Benefits

Dear Governors,

Together, the undersigned organizations represent around half a million physicians across the nation. We write today to thank you for including telemedicine services in your response to the current COVID-19 public health emergency. Increased flexibilities and broader insurance coverage for telemedicine have made it possible for us to treat our patients and increase access to care during the pandemic. We have been able to serve new patients in rural and underserved communities as well as in major cities, while maintaining care for our existing patients. While telemedicine cannot replace all patient care, the extension of telemedicine benefits in recent months has rapidly changed the way we see patients and has provided a push for innovation that has allowed us to safely increase access to high quality care. Please support legislation and regulations in your state that will require the broad coverage and payment of telemedicine even after the pandemic ends.

Patients have reported that telemedicine has been a positive experience with fewer “no-shows” than in-person visits. They are grateful to have it as an option and appreciate that it is now more widely covered by their insurance providers. Telemedicine can also save patients time and money since they do not have to travel to a doctor’s office or rearrange their personal and family schedules around a doctor’s visit; they can receive care from the comfort of their own homes. Some patients who are reticent to see a physician face-to-face feel more comfortable seeking care via telemedicine. When patients seek care earlier, it is more likely to save money for both them and insurers in the long run. Even after COVID-19 is no longer considered a health concern when traveling to a doctor’s office, many patients will still want to use telemedicine for all the reasons listed above.

All payers should cover telemedicine the same as in-person visits as it relates to payment and access, including audio only communications; this coverage should continue after the public health emergency has ended. Please support legislation and regulations that will make the broad coverage of telemedicine a requirement within your state.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
American Academy of Ophthalmology
American Academy of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery
American Association of Orthopaedic Surgeons
American College of Emergency Physicians
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
American College of Surgeons
American Osteopathic Association
American Psychiatric Association
American Urological Association
Association for Clinical Oncology
Emergency Department Practice Management Association