



AMERICAN OSTEOPATHIC ASSOCIATION

TREATING OUR FAMILY AND YOURS



TO: Members of the Maryland State Senate Finance Committee

FROM: Maryland Association of Osteopathic Physicians
American Osteopathic Association

DATE: February 13, 2018

SUBJECT: Senate Bill 211

The American Osteopathic Association (AOA) and the Maryland Association of Osteopathic Physicians (MAOP) are writing in support of SB 211. This bill authorizes a Medical Director of a behavioral health program located in a federally designated health professional shortage area to provide services through telemedicine. The AOA and MAOP support the delivery of appropriate health care services utilizing online technology, online consultations and internet-based health programs, as well as coverage for such services by government and other third-party payers.

The AOA represents 137,000 osteopathic physicians and medical students, promotes public health, encourages scientific research, serves as the primary certifying body for DOs and is the accrediting agency for osteopathic medical schools. More information on DOs/osteopathic medicine can be found at www.osteopathic.org. MAOP is a professional medical organization that represents over 1,100 DOs providing patient care in Maryland.

Benefits of telemedicine:

- As technology advances and the breadth of medical practice in this area expands, there is an increasing need to support the appropriate delivery of health care through technological resources.
- Telemedicine provides improved access to medical care and services to patients in rural or distant areas and allows for easier access to care for immobile patients and those with limited mobility.
- Cost-effectiveness, through reduced travel times, is an additional benefit of delivering health care services through telemedicine.

While this bill authorizes the provision of certain services through telemedicine, it is also important to establish payment parity between services delivered via telemedicine and equivalent services delivered in person. Providing payment parity will ensure that providers are able to utilize telemedicine to help improve access to care for all individuals, including low-income patients in rural and remote

areas, and those with limited mobility. We encourage you to consider amending this legislation to provide for payment parity between health care services delivered in person and via telemedicine.

The AOA and MAOP request that you support SB 211. Should you need any additional information, please feel free to contact Raine Richards, JD, Director, State Government Affairs at richards@osteopathic.org or (312) 202-8199.

Sincerely,



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President, AOA



Brian Kahan, DO
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