



AMERICAN OSTEOPATHIC ASSOCIATION

TREATING OUR FAMILY AND YOURS



February 21, 2018

The Honorable John C. Astle
Vice-Chair
Maryland State Senate Finance Committee
James Senate Office Building, Room 123
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Vice-Chair Astle:

The American Osteopathic Association (AOA) and the Maryland Association of Osteopathic Physicians (MAOP) are writing in support of SB 704. This bill authorizes the use of telemedicine by psychiatrists who provide certain services to Maryland Medical Assistance Program recipients, and establishes payment parity with equivalent services delivered in-person. 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 (DOs) 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.

We appreciate how this legislation provides for payment parity between services delivered via telemedicine and equivalent services delivered in person. Providing payment parity ensures 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 who are hardest to reach.

Providing payment parity for psychiatric services delivered to Maryland Medical Assistance Program recipients via telemedicine will enable more qualified professionals to participate, thereby increasing access to health care for low-income patients in rural and remote areas, and for those with limited mobility.

The AOA and MAOP thank you for your leadership in introducing SB 704. 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
President, MAOP

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