



May 2, 2017

The Honorable Patricia Hymanson  
Chairwoman  
Maine State Joint Health and Human Services Committee  
34 High Pine Road  
York, Maine 03909

Dear Chairwoman Hymanson:

**The American Osteopathic Association (AOA) and the Maine Osteopathic Association (MOA) are writing to urge you to support LD 1485.** This bill requires payment for health care services provided through telemedicine at the same rate as services provided in person for MaineCare recipients. The AOA and the MOA support the delivery of health care services utilizing online technology, online consultations and internet-based health programs, when those services can be delivered without diminishing the quality of care or jeopardizing the standard of care. When these criteria are met, we support coverage and payment for such services by government and third-party payers.

The AOA represents nearly 130,000 osteopathic physicians (DOs) and osteopathic 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](http://www.osteopathic.org). The MOA is a professional medical organization that represents approximately 400 DOs and an additional 500 residents and students providing patient care in Maine.

#### **Benefits of telemedicine:**

- The practice of medicine via electronic and technological means has been occurring for decades. 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.

Providing payment parity for telemedicine services delivered to patients in Maine will ease access to health care for all individuals and allow low-income patients in rural and remote areas, and those with limited mobility, to receive the care they need. One particular example is in the treatment of substance use disorder, which is a major health issue in our state; however, few qualified specialists are available. Establishing payment rate parity for telemedicine services will enable more qualified professionals to participate in MaineCare, thereby increasing access to treatment.

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The AOA and MOA request that you **support LD 1485**. Should you or your staff have any questions, please contact Nick Schilligo, AOA's Associate Vice President for State Government Affairs, at [nschilligo@osteopathic.org](mailto:nschilligo@osteopathic.org) or (312) 202-8185.

Sincerely,



Boyd R. Buser, DO  
President, AOA



Merideth Norris, DO, FACOFP  
President-elect, MOA

CC: Mark A. Baker, DO, AOA President-elect  
William J. Burke, DO, Chair, AOA Department of Governmental Affairs  
Richard Thacker, DO, Chair, AOA Bureau of State Government Affairs  
Adrienne White-Faines, MPA, AOA Chief Executive Officer  
Laura Wooster, MPH, Senior Vice President, AOA Public Policy  
Nicholas Schilligo, MS, Associate Vice President, AOA State Government Affairs  
Angela Cole-Westhoff, Executive Director, MOA