



AMERICAN OSTEOPATHIC ASSOCIATION

TREATING OUR FAMILY AND YOURS



February 8, 2017

The Honorable Ann Rivers
Chairwoman
Washington State Senate Health Care Committee
466 J.A. Cherberg Building
PO Box 40466
Olympia, Washington 98504

Dear Chairwoman Rivers:

The American Osteopathic Association (AOA) and the Washington Osteopathic Medical Association (WOMA) are writing in support of SB 5355. This bill requires access to health care services delivered through telemedicine for injured workers. It also requires that payment for telemedicine services provided to worker's compensation patients be in line with services provided under other insurance plans. The AOA and WOMA 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. WOMA is a professional medical organization that represents nearly 1,500 DOs providing patient care in Washington.

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 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.

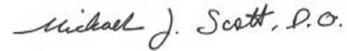
Expanding access and coverage for telemedicine services delivered to injured workers in Washington State will improve the ability of patients in rural and remote areas, and those with limited mobility, to receive the care they need. **The AOA and WOMA thank you for your leadership in introducing SB 5355.** Should you need any additional information, please feel free to contact Nicholas Schilligo, MS, Associate Vice President, State Government Affairs, at nshelligo@osteopathic.org or (800) 621-1773, ext. 8185.

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Sincerely,



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President, AOA



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