

Chris O'Brien

From: Beth <rocchiob@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, July 14, 2020 6:08 PM
To: Chris O'Brien
Subject: COVID-19 telemedicine house bill 7171

To whom it may concern,

I am submitting testimony as a physician who takes care of people with multiple chronic medical problems including diabetes, hypertension, high cholesterol, asthma, sleep apnea, cardiovascular disease, cancer, autoimmune disease, & obesity. Being able to do telehealth has been extremely helpful to keep patients as healthy as possible thereby reducing their risk of infection with COVID-19. Remote visits have been helpful to reduce to zero the risk of people carrying, transmitting or contracting the virus at the office. The remote visits have reduced stress for people during this stressful time and stress negatively affects health, including the immune system. The patients I take care of are healthcare workers of all kinds (nurses, medical assistants, physicians, social workers, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, administrative staff, phlebotomists), school teachers & principals, parents, grandparents, police officers, fire fighters, employees of health plans. If all of these people come back into the office, the risk of them being infected would increase even if we did everything we could to minimize transmission. I also worry that the quality of the visit would actually go down and not up. Also the overall stress burden to be able to talk on the phone versus come into the office would go up if they were required to come back into the office anytime soon. Furthermore, the nurse practitioner in my practice has chronic disease that puts her at risk herself, and she is afraid of her exposure should she be required to come back. For the past 3 months, she has been able to take care of patients remotely while not only helping them to stay as healthy as possible, but also keeping them and herself safe. Risk to other staff in the office who also have chronic disease is also to be considered. Additionally, the risk of staff spreading the disease to their family or elsewhere is also a concern.

Please continue to allow patients to have physician & provider access through telehealth.

Respectfully,
Elizabeth M Rocchio, MD