



**TESTIMONY OF
CONNECTICUT HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION
SUBMITTED TO THE
HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE
Tuesday, March 19, 2019**

SB 1052, An Act Expanding Medicaid Coverage Of Telehealth Services

The Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA) appreciates this opportunity to submit testimony concerning **SB 1052, An Act Expanding Medicaid Coverage Of Telehealth Services**. CHA supports the bill.

Before commenting on the bill, it's important to point out that Connecticut hospitals and health systems provide high quality care for everyone, regardless of their ability to pay. By investing in the future of Connecticut's hospitals, we will strengthen our healthcare system and our economy, put communities to work, and deliver affordable care that Connecticut families deserve.

Telehealth is a fairly new, rapidly developing method of delivering direct patient care that is becoming more commonly used in Connecticut and across the country. While once used mainly for primary care, telehealth is now being utilized for the full spectrum of care and for more levels of acuity. Telehealth is becoming an important tool to improve access for behavioral health and substance use care. Connecticut hospitals are strong supporters of using telehealth to provide and increase access to care.

SB 1052 requires the Department of Social Services (DSS) to expand Medicaid coverage of telehealth services statewide whenever such coverage meets federal Medicaid requirements for efficiency, economy, and quality of care.

In September 2018, Congressmen Courtney, Larson, and Himes, along with Congresswomen DeLauro and Esty, wrote to DSS encouraging them to seek a 1115 waiver to begin reimbursing healthcare providers for telemedicine services provided HUSKY recipients. In urging the action, Connecticut's congressional delegation wrote, "Unfortunately, Connecticut is the only state in the nation where Medicaid recipients cannot access telehealth services, including telemental health, and we encourage the Department of Social Services to address this unnecessary barrier to care by amending the state plan."

CHA supports SB 1052, as it would expand coverage of telehealth in the Medicaid program and require an amendment to the state plan to establish rates of reimbursement for telehealth services not already included under other rates of reimbursement in the Medicaid state plan.

Thank you for your consideration of our position. For additional information, contact CHA Government Relations at (203) 294-7310.