



MAINE'S LEADING
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TESTIMONY OF THE MAINE HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION

In Support Of

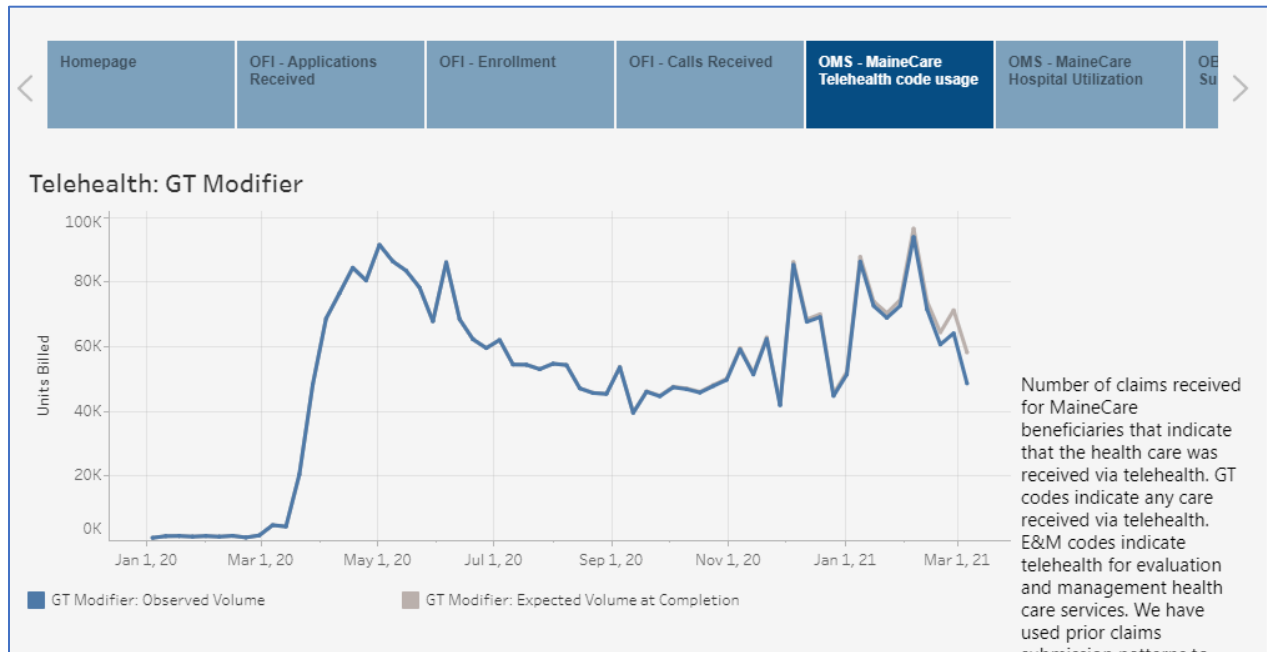
Telehealth Bills

May 6, 2021

Senator Sanborn, Representative Tepler and members of the Health Coverage and Insurance and Financial Services Committee, my name is Jeffrey Austin and I am with the Maine Hospital Association. I am offering this testimony in support of one change to the telehealth statutes. I apologize I am not able to participate with you today.

The Maine Hospital Association (MHA) represents all 36 community-governed hospitals including 33 non-profit general acute care hospitals, 2 private psychiatric hospitals, and 1 acute rehabilitation hospital.

Our members have supported greater utilization of telehealth as well as reasonable state statutes that facilitate use of telehealth. The pandemic was like a lightning bolt into telehealth services. Below is the chart of MaineCare utilization of telehealth during the pandemic.



You can see that the use (which I believe is weekly, but I'm not sure) jumped considerably. I think that is a testament to both patients and providers willingness to embrace a technology that many may have been skeptical of previously.

During the pandemic, telehealth coverage has included telephone-only (as opposed to two-way audio and video) communications. It is this provision we are testifying to support today. I believe Medicaid is going to continue to allow audio-only communication after the state of emergency expires.

The audio-only provision appears in the legislation before you as follows:

- LD 323 – Section 2.
- LD 333 – Section 2.
- LD 849 – Section 1.
- LD 1007 – Section 2 (I think, the wording is a bit unclear).
- LD 1361 – Section 1.
- LD 1681 – Throughout the bill.

I believe it also appeared in legislation that was before this committee earlier this session.

We appreciate that most of the telehealth bills include this provision and whichever vehicle moves forward, we hope you include it.

Thank you.