



LD 333: An Act Regarding Telehealth

Dear Members of the Committee On Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services,

My name is Jessica Bolduc, I am the current president of the Maine Occupational Therapy Association and occupational therapy practitioner in the state of Maine. I am writing this letter to advocate for LD333 and ask for your support in passage of the bill.

LD 333: An Act Regarding Telehealth changes the provisions governing health insurance coverage of telehealth services by authorizing the delivery of health care services through telehealth by audio-only telephone when needs arise; clarifies that reimbursement for telehealth services must be made on the same basis and at the same rate as if the services were delivered in person; clarifies that a carrier may not establish separate deductible limits for telehealth services that are not applied in the aggregate with other services covered under a health plan; and prohibits a carrier from placing restrictions on prescribing medication through telehealth that are more restrictive than requirements of applicable state and federal law for prescribing medication in person.

For many Mainers most in need, such as children and youth, older adults, and those with mental health issues, telehealth has been a means to continue delivering necessary Occupational Therapy services. Occupational therapists provide services in a variety of settings including hospitals, clinics, schools, nursing homes and home health settings. We provide necessary therapy services to clients of all ages including treatment for injured, ill, or disabled clients to develop, recover, and improve skills needed to function in at home, school, work, or in the community. A few things we do are to help children with disabilities to participate fully in school and develop social skills; assist older adults to support themselves through physical/cognitive changes, address physical, psychological, and cognitive aspects of a client's well-being; evaluate a client's abilities and environments, create customized goals and interventions, recommend equipment, and deliver training for adaptation, and provide guidance and education for family members and caregivers.

Practitioners and clients have provided us with feedback in regard to using telehealth; barring the learning curve of using technology and maintaining the technology, utilizing telehealth has enabled clients to continue receiving necessary services, maintain and gain function and skills during the pandemic. Additionally, this has enabled private practices to continue to function during in-person restrictions with the pandemic and allowed them to expand the number of the clients they are able to serve. Therefore, client access to occupational therapy services has improved with the use of telehealth by OTs and OTAs. These gains cannot be lost. This is not a substitution for in-person, hands on intervention, but rather another tool that occupational therapy practitioners can utilize to meet the needs of the clients they serve.

Please support the passage of LD 333 to support the practice of Occupational Therapy in Maine.

Warm regards,

Jessica

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