



11 Columbia St.
Augusta, ME 04330
Tel.: (207) 621-0313
Fax: (207) 622-4437
Pam@mnpa.us
www.mnpa.us

26 Years of Full Practice Authority as Healthcare Providers for the People of Maine

Testimony in support of LDs 323, 333, 849, and 1007

May 6, 2021

Senator Sanborn, Representative Tepler
Members of the HCIFS Committee

My name is Pamela Cahill, I live in Woolwich, Maine and serve as the Executive Director of the Maine Nurse Practitioner Association. Thank you for hearing these important bills relating to telehealth services in Maine. I offer testimony on behalf of MNPA in support of LDs 323, 333, 849, and 1007. We also look forward to learning more about the Governor's new bill, LD1681, that was printed earlier this week. We have not yet had an opportunity to review or discuss this bill with MNPA's legislative committee.

Currently there are more than 2000 nurse practitioners licensed and working in Maine. These healthcare providers work in nearly every practice environment including private practice, independent practices, medical practices, clinics, FQHCs, physician practices, hospitals and the VA.

The Maine Nurse Practitioner Association is in full support of removing permanently restrictions for telehealth services in Maine by extending provisions of the Governor's Executive Order # 16 for healthcare practitioners, working within their scopes of practice.

Originally, MaineCare required initial prior authorization for telemedicine services followed by annual authorization renewal. In 2016, this requirement was removed after provider feedback asserted that the requirement created significant delays in providing telemedicine services and limited telehealth utilization. This important policy change, along with removal of geographic restrictions, created significant re-engagement from early telemedicine adopters and leadership in our state. The policy further confirmed that a service that could be safely delivered via telemedicine (as determined by the healthcare provider) and was covered by MaineCare in the in-person setting was eligible for telehealth service coverage and reimbursed at the same rate as the in-person service payment. 1

MNPA also supports requiring parity by private insurance carriers to reimburse for all telehealth services at the same basis and at the same rate as if the services were delivered in person.

Telehealth has come a long way in recent years and has become a most important asset to patients and providers alike during this pandemic. Because of telehealth we now can provide remote healthcare to the most rural areas of Maine and from infants to the elderly alike. It is only reasonable that we now include the use of telehealth in everyday healthcare delivery.

All healthcare providers who have stepped up to provide the very best care for Maine people are heroes of the last year. We support an omnibus bill that permanently allows all healthcare providers, working in Maine and beyond and working within their scopes of practice to utilize telehealth as a tool in their healthcare delivery toolbox.

1 The paediatric weight management office visit via telemedicine pre- to post-COVID-19 pandemic.htm

Thank you for your consideration.

References

The Journal for Nurse Practitioners. 17(2021) 218-221 Telehealth Benefits and Barriers, Shilpa N. Gajarawala, Jessica N. Pelkowski.