



Alliance for Addiction and Mental Health Services, Maine

The unified voice for Maine's community behavioral health providers

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Testimony in support of several bills today:

LD 323: An Act Regarding Insurance Coverage for Telehealth Services

LD 333: An Act Regarding Telehealth

LD 849: An Act To Make Permanent the Telehealth Reimbursement Options Passed by
Emergency Measures

May 6, 2021

Good afternoon Senator Sanborn, Representative Tepler, and members of the Joint Standing Committee On Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services. I am Malory Shaughnessy, a resident of Westbrook, and the Executive Director of the Alliance for Addiction and Mental Health Services. Please accept this testimony on behalf of the Alliance **in support of LD 323, 333, 849, and and maintaining expanded telehealth services.**

LD 323, 333, and 849, as well as a couple of the other bills before you today, make permanent several aspects of the Governor's Executive Order #35 dated April 6, 2020, which allowed certain licensed or registered professionals under Title of the Maine Revised Statutes to provide necessary health care or other services to the extent practicable through the use of all modes of telehealth, including visual and audio, audio-only or other electronic media. These bills clarify that these services must be covered by insurance as they would be if provided in person. They also allow patients receiving MaineCare health services to provide verbal, electronic or written consent to telehealth and telemonitoring services.

The Alliance supports rolling these bills up into one omnibus bill that permanently leaves the enhanced access to care that was one of the few silver linings of the Pandemic.

Through the expanded telehealth options, many Mainers were able to access services in geographic areas of Maine that aren't usually covered due to their rural nature. Many Mainers were able to receive services on a regular basis who often miss appointments due to unstable transportation. Many Mainers who struggle to leave their homes were able to meet face to face with therapists.

This expansion added a very useful tool to the healthcare toolbox for our practitioners. We do not want to see them go away. Thank you!

*With 35 members, the **Alliance** is the state association for Maine's community based mental health and substance use treatment providers. The **Alliance** advocates for the implementation of sound policies and evidence-based practices that serve to enhance the quality and effectiveness of our behavioral health care system. All Mainers should have full access to the continuum of recovery-oriented systems of care for mental illness and substance use disorder – from prevention through treatment and into peer recovery support.*