

Support for “Increasing access to telehealth services”

As the President of the Board of Directors of the CT Oral Health Initiative and, more importantly, a CT citizen residing in the town of Newington, I am in support of the inclusion of licensed dentists in the list of providers offering telehealth services.

Teledentistry is useful, pragmatic and sensible in that it can offer patients screenings and consultation for urgent or emergent issues and oral health concerns, treatment planning, and patient education. This option allows dental providers to safely communicate with their patients, particularly important in the current COVID-19 environment when many patients are concerned with face-to-face office visits. It is an important tool that has the potential to increase patient/provider communication and address logistical barriers to care.

Having cared for patients with oral health needs coming to the emergency room as a last resort, I have seen firsthand the pain and frustration that comes from the inability to access other dental care options. Further, I worked for many years conducting research focused on the oral health of older low income adults. The option for dental screening and consultation via telehealth is particularly useful for patients with limited mobility or access to reliable transportation. This also is an important factor for many of CT's low income families and marginalized populations.

I encourage support for the inclusion of licensed dentists and teledentistry in the proposed legislation for “Increasing access to telehealth services” through June of 2021.

Respectfully submitted,

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