

Telehealth
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Town: Jamestown, Rhode Island

Senator Lesser, Representative Scanlon, Senator Kelly, Representative Pavalock-D'Amato, and distinguished members of the Insurance and Real Estate Committee: My name is Dr. Catherine Shafts, and I am the Medical Director at Generations Family Health Center's Danielson site. Generations is a Federally Qualified Community Health Center that provides medical, dental, behavioral health and support services in eastern Connecticut. This part of Connecticut is extremely rural and lacks public or reliable transportation systems.

I had a 50-year-old man, an amputee, who developed acute onset right leg and foot pain and so a same day telehealth video visit was set up. He has transportation issues. During the visit I determined he needed urgent testing which led to an urgent referral to a vascular surgeon, admission into the hospital, and three admissions for three surgeries all over two weeks. I was able to keep track of him, do video visits in between and help him with his needs. He was so grateful. He was told he would have lost his right leg if he didn't get the care he needed that quickly. He was so happy not to lose another limb. He said he felt immensely cared for and supported, especially with how simple it was to have a video visit with me whenever he had concerns. A quick click on a link and I was with him in his living room. As you can see, telehealth is needed in Connecticut, especially in rural areas like eastern Connecticut.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue. Providers like me have had tremendous success with telehealth, and we need to make access this kind of healthcare permanent so that we can provide healthcare services to all of the residents in Connecticut.