



**Alliance for
Patient Access**

November 21, 2024

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Majority Leader of the Senate
Hart Senate Office Building, 322
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader of the Senate
Russell Senate Office Building, 317
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker of the House
Cannon House Office Building, 418
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
House Minority Leader
Rayburn House Office Building, 2433
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Extending Medicare Telehealth Flexibilities

Dear Leader McConnell, Leader Schumer, Speaker Johnson, and Leader Jeffries:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we commend Congress for its leadership in advancing telehealth policies that have supported high-quality patient access and continuity of care for millions of Americans.

Today, we write to urge Congress to take swift, bipartisan action to extend existing Medicare telehealth flexibilities. As you are aware, this is a pivotal year for telehealth policy. Without further congressional action, crucial telehealth flexibilities will expire on December 31, 2024 – jeopardizing access to critical telehealth services for millions of Medicare beneficiaries.

We appreciate Congress for its previous action to extend telehealth flexibilities and respectfully urge Congress to act again. Telehealth plays a vital role in enhancing health care delivery and we must preserve telehealth advancements. We strongly support provisions that offer an exemption to the geographic and originating site restrictions and flexibilities for Medicare beneficiaries to receive telehealth services inside the home or at a site where they can access a telecommunications system. We also value the coverage of audio-only services. Furthermore, we fully endorse efforts that increase transparency and accountability among pharmacy benefit managers.

As telehealth has become an integral part of our nation's health care system, we encourage Congress to direct the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) to propose a long-term strategy that supports patient access and quality of care. While telehealth is not a replacement for in-person care, it is a critical component to a patient-centered approach. Studies show that telehealth can improve medication adherence and reduce downstream emergency department visits.¹ It is an effective tool in supplementing access to care, especially for rural and underserved communities.

Both patients and health care providers benefit when they have the flexibility to choose in-person or telehealth visits, based on the medical need. Medicare beneficiaries have come to rely on expanded access and are generally satisfied with their telehealth visits.ⁱⁱ Moreover, telehealth has proven both popular and sustainable, and many health care providers are supportive of keeping these services accessible.

With temporary waivers set to expire, we urge Congress to act and make telehealth a priority, providing stability for patients and providers and ensuring a patient-centered approach to care. We stand ready to work with you to ensure that Medicare beneficiaries do not lose access to these vital services in 2025.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Stephanie Hu at SHu@allianceforpatientaccess.org.

Sincerely,

AiArthritis
Allergy & Asthma Network
Alliance for Gout Awareness
Alpha-1 Foundation
American Association for Respiratory Care
American Association of Cardiovascular and Pulmonary Rehabilitation
American Association of Kidney Patients
American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology
American College of CHEST Physicians
American Podiatric Medical Association
American Society for Bone and Mineral Research
American Society for Preventative Cardiology
Caregiver Action Network
Center for Patient Advocacy Leaders
Central Texas Rheumatology Associates
Coalition for Headache and Migraine Patients
COPD Action Alliance
Cystic Fibrosis Engagement Network
Danielle Byron Henry Migraine Foundation
Diabetes Leadership Council
Diabetes Patient Advocacy Coalition
Emphysema Foundation of America
Endocrine Society
Endocrine Nurses Society
Eosinophilic and Rare Disease Cooperative
Epilepsy Alliance America
Future Leaders in Sight
Gout Support Group of America
HD Reach
HealthyWomen
Heart Valve Voice US
Huntington's Disease Youth Organization

Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy Association
International Hyperhidrosis Society
Infusion Access Foundation
Lupus and Allied Diseases Association, Inc.
Miles for Migraine
Movement Disorders Policy Coalition
National Alliance for Eye and Vision Research
National Alliance on Mental Illness
National Ataxia Foundation
National Organization for Tardive Dyskinesia
Partnership to Advance Cardiovascular Health
Prevent Blindness
Preventive Cardiovascular Nurses Association
Respiratory Health Association
RetireSafe
StopAfib.org
TED Community Organization
The Headache and Migraine Policy Forum
The Mended Hearts, Inc.
Tourette Association of America
Tuberous Sclerosis Complex Alliance
U.S. Pain Foundation
VisionServe Alliance
WomenHeart

CC: Chairwoman Cathy McMorris Rodgers, United States House Committee on Energy and Commerce

Ranking Member Frank Pallone Jr., United States House Committee on Energy and Commerce

Chairman Jason Smith, United States House Committee on Ways and Means

Ranking Member Richard Neal, United States House Committee on Ways and Means

Chairman Bernie Sanders, United States Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

Ranking Member Bill Cassidy, United States Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

Chairman Ron Wyden, United States Senate Committee on Finance

Ranking Member Mike Crapo, United States Senate Committee on Finance

ⁱ A. Morenz and J. Liao, “Use Value-based Payment to Resolve the Debate About Telehealth Payment Parity,” *Health Affairs*, August 2, 2021. Available at:

<https://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/10.1377/forefront.20210726.882779>.

ⁱⁱ [Jun23_Ch7_MedPAC_Report_To_Congress_SEC.pdf](#)