Dear [ ]

I am writing to you in support of HB123/SB3, the Preserve Telehealth Access Act of 2021.

[Insert personal information, where you live, where you work, why this is important to you.]

As COVID-19 led many Marylanders to stay home, hospitals and doctors rushed to embrace the long-available but underused tool of telehealth—delivering health care remotely to keep both patients and providers safe. Emergency federal and state waivers freed hospitals and health systems to ramp up telehealth quickly. Telehealth during this period was universally supported by patients and by hospital caregivers. They recognized that even beyond times of crisis, telehealth broadens access to care, improves patient outcomes and satisfaction, and chips away at long-standing health inequities.

These benefits must continue beyond federal and state health emergencies.

To help, I ask you to **support the Preserve Telehealth Access Act.** This bill ensures the extension of four policy changes that continue to remove barriers to telehealth during COVID-19:

* Eases restrictions on originating and distant sites, meaning that both providers and patients have greater discretion on the most appropriate physical location to hold their telehealth appointment
* Allows for reimbursement parity between in-person and telehealth services
* Acknowledges value of health care services delivered via audio-only modalities, especially to vulnerable and underserved populations with internet and technology challenges—the communities most likely to have limited health care access
* Removes barriers to coverage for remote patient monitoring services, so providers can identify health issues and intervene before they escalate and require emergency care

[Insert any data available regarding patient experience and satisfaction, and health outcomes].

This bill brings Maryland in line with neighboring jurisdictions that passed legislation to ensure access to necessary health care, regardless of the modality through which it is delivered.

Backing away could leave thousands of Marylanders without care: we need long-term solutions to permanently remove barriers to deliver safe, reliable care via telehealth to all Marylanders, wherever they are. Support the Preserve Telehealth Access Act. I urge the committee’s favorable report on HB123-SB3 Preserve Telehealth Access Act, with amendments confirmed by the Maryland Hospital Association.

Sincerely,

[ ]