



Maryland
Hospital Association

February 13, 2020

To: The Honorable Pinsky, Chairman
Senate Education, Health & Environmental Affairs Committee

From: Jennifer Witten, Vice President, Government Affairs, Maryland Hospital Association

Re: Letter of Support: Senate Bill 402-Health Care Practitioners-Telehealth

Dear Chairman Pinsky and Committee Members,

On behalf of the Maryland Hospital Association's (MHA) 61 member hospitals and health systems, we appreciate the opportunity to comment on Senate Bill 402. Maryland's nonprofit hospitals and health systems care for millions of people each year, treating 2.3 million in emergency departments and delivering more than 67,000 babies. The 108,000 people they employ are [caring for Maryland](#) around-the-clock every day—delivering leading edge, high-quality medical service.

Increasingly hospitals are adopting telehealth and virtual visits to expand access to care and remove barriers to health services for Marylanders.

Senate Bill 402 would strengthen these efforts and establish standards across all health occupation boards to ensure standard of practice applies for care delivered via telehealth. The bill does not modify or diminish the role, oversight, safety and disciplinary action authority of the boards. SB 401 would allow for telehealth to meet patients' needs in different forms supported by a health care provider making recommendations for care and treatment. Additionally, the proposed legislation clarifies and streamlines the board's existing telehealth requirements. These requirements apply broadly across all types of telehealth—easing the burden on providers and hospitals to comply with separate sets of requirements depending on the technology they use.

Further, the legislation is sensitive to several important consumer protections that ensure providers have necessary patient consent before providing telehealth and that they appropriately document telehealth services in compliance with HIPPA and privacy requirements.

Telehealth is a potential tool to address physician shortages, expand access to behavioral health care, and improve efficiencies. Telehealth opens the door to new delivery models that extend the reach of the provider to where patients need care—anytime, anyplace. The Maryland Model encourages unique approaches to providing care to patients in the community and improving population health. The proposed legislation is an important step to expand access to essential health care services and assist in meeting the goals of the Maryland Total Cost of Care Model.

For these reasons we urge a **favorable report on SB 402**.

For more information, please contact:
Jennifer Witten
Jwitten@mhaonline.org