

October 28, 2021

The Honorable Greg Abbott
Governor
State of Texas
P.O. Box 12428
Austin, TX 78711

RE: Letter to Governors on Recent or Impending Expiration of Licensure Flexibilities for Care Across State Lines

Dear Governor Abbott:

Expanded access to telehealth during the COVID-19 pandemic has shone a light on its ability to fill gaps in patient access to care. During the public health emergency, governors across the country used emergency authority to [waive](#) some aspect(s) of state licensure requirements to facilitate greater patient access to care. Doing so allowed licensed medical professionals more flexibility to treat patients in other states when there were pressing needs or specialized expertise not available where they lived. Our experience during the pandemic has provided an unprecedented opportunity for patients, providers, and policymakers to explore the impact of cross-state care – and we have seen it benefit the delivery of health care in many ways, but most notably through new avenues for patient access to care.

Over the last few months, many states have allowed COVID-19 emergency declarations to expire and the licensure flexibilities to expire with it, despite the ongoing pandemic and surge in cases due to the Delta variant. This has been extremely detrimental and disruptive to necessary and ongoing patient care. Health care providers have had to [scramble to notify thousands of out-of-state patients](#) that their telehealth appointments were no longer possible, and that they would have to drive across state borders to keep their appointments.

While challenging for all patients, this reduction in access is particularly troublesome for immunocompromised patients still at high risk for COVID-19. It can also be critically important for individuals who require specialized care, have mobility challenges, or have significant provider shortages and/or geographic distances from the care they need. Many of these patients relied on telehealth throughout the pandemic to see their specialists who reside in another state, made possible by licensure flexibilities enacted at the start of the pandemic, so as not to risk exposure to the virus and to maintain continuity of care through virtual options. In light of these recent changes, it is not uncommon for patients to [drive just over the state border](#) to take a telehealth appointment from their car in a parking lot.

Given the urgency of the times as more states consider rolling back flexibilities enacted at the start of the pandemic, states must act now to ensure patients can access the care they need where they reside and when they need it, without having to choose between cancelling an appointment or traveling long distances and risking potential exposure to the COVID-19 virus for an in-person visit.

The undersigned organizations thank you for your leadership in taking action to maintain licensure flexibilities to address patient needs during the ongoing pandemic. **We have taken steps to urge all state governors to maintain and expand such flexibilities for the duration of the federal public health emergency, reinstate licensure flexibilities if they have expired, or implement new flexibilities to better address patient needs during the ongoing pandemic.** This is critical to ensure patient access to necessary

health care services and providers. We propose the following principles to consider for policies that should be in place right now to ensure patient access to care:

1. We urge governors and state legislatures to keep licensure and telehealth flexibilities in place throughout the duration of the federal public health emergency to ensure patients can access care regardless of their location, without the burden of traveling far distances to receive care or risking exposure to the virus from in-person care.
2. We call on governors and state legislatures to work with health experts to implement solutions to immediately address the ongoing impact of the pandemic on patient care that allows their citizens with more access to and choice of care – including care provided from health care professionals in other states.
3. Moving forward, we call on governors and state legislatures to expand their participation in health professional compacts that allow for the safe and accountable mutual recognition of health professional licensure among states.

Thank you for your consideration of this important request.

Sincerely,

Alliance for Connected Care
ALS Association
National Organization for Rare Disorders
ADNP Kids Research Foundation
Advocacy & Awareness for Immune Disorders Association (AAIDA)
Alabama Association of Health Information Management (AAHIM)
Allergy & Asthma Network
Alpha Medical, Inc
Amazon
American Academy of Home Care Medicine
American Academy of Neurology
American Academy of Physical Medicine And Rehabilitation
American Association for Respiratory Care
American Association of State Colleges and Universities
American College Health Association
American Council on Education
American Geriatrics Society
American Health Care Association/National Center for Assisted Living
American Health Information Management Association
American Occupational Therapy Association
American Pharmacists Association
American Physical Therapy Association
American Porphyria Foundation
American Psychoanalytic Association
American Psychological Association
American Society of Nephrology
American Telemedicine Association
American Urological Association
Americans for Prosperity

AMGA
AMN Healthcare
Amwell
Anxiety and Depression Association of America
Appendix Cancer / Pseudomyxoma Peritonei Research Foundation
Arizona Health Information Management Association
Array Behavioral Care
Arthritis Foundation
Associated Medical Schools of New York
Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness
Association for Creatine Deficiencies
Association of American Cancer Institutes
Association of American Universities
Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges
Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (AICCU)
Association of Independent Colleges and Universities of Ohio
Association of Independent Colleges and Universities of Pennsylvania
Association of Independent Kentucky Colleges and Universities
Association of Oncology Social Work
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities
Association of Public Health Laboratories
ASXL Rare Research Endowment Foundation
Atrius Health
Avery's Hope
AXYS
Billings Clinic
Bon Secours Mercy Health
CACNA1A Foundation
Care Compass Network
Case Western Reserve University
Center for Freedom and Prosperity
Centerstone
Children's Hospital of Philadelphia
Cholangiocarcinoma Foundation
ChristianaCare
CirrusMD
Clinical Social Work Association
Coalition for Headache and Migraine Patients
Colorado Health Information Management Association
Columbia University Irving Medical Center
Congenital Hyperinsulinism International
Connected Home Living
Consortium of Universities of the Washington Metropolitan Area
Cornell University
Council for Christian Colleges & Universities
Council for Higher Education Accreditation
Council of Independent Colleges in Virginia
Council of Independent Nebraska Colleges Foundation (CINCF)

Cromford Health
CT Conference of Independent Colleges
Cure CMD
Cure HHT
Cure SMA
Cure VCP Disease, Inc.
Cushing's Support & Research Foundation
Cystic Fibrosis Foundation
Cystic Fibrosis Research Institute
Doctor On Demand-Grand Rounds Health
Dreamsickle Kids Foundation
Duke University Health System
Dup15q Alliance
Emory University
Encounter Telehealth
Epic
ExamMed
Fibromuscular Dysplasia Society of America
Fight Colorectal Cancer
First Stop Health, LLC
Florida Health Information Management Association
Friedreich's Ataxia Research Alliance (FARA)
Gaucher Community Alliance
Genesys Heart Institute
GenieMD, Inc
Georgia Independent College Association
Global Liver Institute
GRIN2B Foundation
Hardeman County Community Health Center
HCU Network America
Healthcare Information & Management Systems Society (HIMSS)
Healthcare Leadership Council
Hemophilia Federation of America
Hepatitis B Foundation
HiTalk
Hydrocephalus Association
Immune Deficiency Foundation
Independent Colleges and Universities of New Jersey
Independent Colleges of Washington
Intermountain
International OCD Foundation
International Pemphigus Pemphigoid Foundation
International WAGR Syndrome Association
Iredell Memorial Hospital
Jewish Family Service of Atlantic County
Jewish Family Service of Greater New Orleans
Johns Hopkins University & Medicine
Kansas Health Information Management Association

Kohnling, Inc.
Kroger
Kroger Health
LiV-Connected
LUNgevity Foundation
Maryland Hospital Association
Maryland Independent College and University Association (MICUA)
Mass General Brigham
Mayo Clinic
Medical University of South Carolina
Memorial Sloan Kettering
MGA Homecare
Miles for Migraine
Minnesota Health Information Management Association
Minnesota Private College Council
Mississippi Health Information Management Association
MitoAction
MN HIMSS Chapter
Moffitt Cancer Center
Montana Health Information Management Association
MSMU
Multiple System Atrophy Coalition
Muscular Dystrophy Association
Narcolepsy Network
National Association for Behavioral Healthcare
National Association of College and University Business Officers
National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Association of Social Workers
National Athletic Trainers' Association
National Multiple Sclerosis Society
National Nurse-Led Care Consortium
National PKU News
National Psoriasis Foundation
National Tay-Sachs & Allied Diseases Association (NTSAD)
Nebraska Health Information Management Association
Network of Jewish Human Service Agencies
Nevada Health Information Management Association
New Hampshire Nurses Association
New Jersey Association of Mental Health and Addiction Agencies, Inc.
New York Health Information Management Association
New York University
North Dakota Health Information Management Association
NYU Langone Health
OCHIN
Ohio Health Information Management Association
One Medical
Oregon Alliance of Independent Colleges and Universities

OrHIMA
Orion Behavioral Health Network
Our Odyssey
Palmetto Care Connections
PAVMT (PAs in Virtual Medicine & Telemedicine)
PCHAlliance
Penn State University
Pennsylvania Health Information Management Association
Phelan-McDermid Syndrome Foundation
Princeton University
Providence
Psychiatric Medical Care
Psychotherapy Action Network (PsiAN)
PTEN Hamartoma Tumor Syndrome Foundation
Pulmonary Fibrosis Foundation
Qure4u Health
Rare and Undiagnosed Network (RUN)
REDC Consortium
Remember The Girls
Rochester Regional Health
Rockhurst University
Samaritan Daytop Village
Sara's Cure (Clear Cell Sarcoma Foundation)
Scripps
SLC6A1 Connect
Small Business & Entrepreneurship Council
Society of General Internal Medicine
South Carolina Department of Mental Health
Spartanburg Regional Healthcare System
Spinal Leak CSF Foundation
SSM Health
Stanford Children's Health
Stanford Health Care
STXBP1 Foundation
Superficial Siderosis Research Alliance
SYNGAP1 Foundation
Tennessee Health Information Management Association
Tennessee Independent Colleges and Universities Association
Texas Health Information Management Association
The Desmond Tumor Research Foundation
The E.WE Foundation
The ERISA Industry Committee
The Hypersomnia Foundation
The Jewish Federations of North America
The Marfan Foundation
The Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research
Traverse Therapeutics
Trinity Health

Turner Syndrome Society of the United States
UMass Memorial Health
United Leukodystrophy Foundation
UnityBPO
University of Iowa Health Care
University of Maryland Faculty Physicians, Inc.
University of Southern California
UW Health
Vasculitis Foundation
Vesta Healthcare
Vestibular Disorders Association
VHL Alliance
Virtual Physical Therapists, PLLC
Vizient, Inc.
Wilhelm Foundation
Wisconsin Health Information Management Association
Xia-Gibbs Society