



June 8, 2023

The Honorable Christina Henderson
Chair, Committee on Health
Council of the District of Columbia
The John A. Wilson Building, S. 402
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20004

Re: Bill 25-125 – Uniform Telehealth Act of 2023 – Support

Dear Chair Henderson:

On behalf of the [Alliance for Connected Care](#) (the Alliance), we appreciate the opportunity to comment on Bill 25-125 – Uniform Telehealth Act of 2023, which would adopt the Uniform Telehealth Act in the District of Columbia, and write to express our support for this legislation.

The Alliance is an advocacy organization dedicated to improving access to care through the reduction of policy, legal and regulatory barriers to the adoption of telemedicine and remote patient monitoring. Our [members](#) are leading health care and technology companies from across the spectrum (including those with presence in the District and across the DMV region), representing health systems, health payers, and technology innovators. The Alliance works in partnership with an [Advisory Board](#) of 50 patient and provider groups, including many types of clinician specialty and patient advocacy groups who wish to better utilize the opportunities created by telehealth.

The increase in the use of telehealth throughout the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted its ability to improve patient access to care. Telehealth can be permanently integrated into the health care system in ways that can improve access, care coordination, medication adherence, post-operative care, diagnostic testing review, and patient engagement, and to reduce patient travel burden.

The Uniform Telehealth Act of 2023 would provide the District with the clear guidance and framework needed to facilitate the delivery of services via telehealth consistent with the standard of care of the jurisdiction in which the patient is located. It would also establish a registration system for out-of-state practitioners to provide telehealth services to patients located in the jurisdiction adopting this Act, therefore enabling practitioners to provide widespread assistance to patients in a more convenient and cost-effective manner.

The Alliance believes that one of the biggest barriers to telehealth becoming a regular patient and provider choice is the administrative burden caused by the variation in licensure requirements across the country. The registration process that would be established for out-of-state practitioners through this bill would be monumental in increasing access to care and ensuring continuity of care for patients in the District of Columbia, particularly for patients living in areas experiencing provider shortages or health care deserts, while maintaining protections for patients. Similar policies have been put in place already by Florida and Arizona, which have an out-of-state registration process for the practice of telehealth.



Our experience during the pandemic has provided an unprecedented opportunity for patients, providers, and policymakers to explore the impact of cross-state care. All 50 states and D.C. chose to [modify or waive](#) licensure requirements during the pandemic to better enable the delivery of care via telehealth. These licensure flexibilities provided health care practitioners more flexibility to treat patients in other jurisdictions when there were pressing needs or specialized expertise not available where they lived. We have seen it benefit the delivery of health care in many ways, but most notably through new avenues for patient access to care.

Patients should be at the center of their health care. This means they should be able to 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 to see a provider.

This bill would be a foundational first step to better facilitate the delivery of telehealth services and address the patchwork of licensure laws that exist from state to state to ensure patients can continue to be at the center of their care. We strongly encourage the Committee on Health and the Council of the District of Columbia to support this legislation.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to working with you on this important effort. Please contact Rikki Lam at rikki.lam@connectwithcare.org with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Krista Drobac". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Krista Drobac
Executive Director
Alliance for Connected Care