



February 2, 2023

The Honorable Annette Cleveland
Chair, Senate Health & Long Term Care Committee
Washington State Legislature
220 John A. Cherberg Building
304 15th Ave SW
Olympia, WA 98501

Re: Senate Bill 5481 – Concerning the uniform telemedicine act – Support

Dear Chair Cleveland:

On behalf of the [Alliance for Connected Care](#) (the Alliance), we appreciate the opportunity to comment on Senate Bill 5481, which would adopt the Uniform Telemedicine Act in the State of Washington, 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, representing health systems, health payers, and technology innovators. The Alliance works in partnership with an Advisory Board of more than 40 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 during 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 Telemedicine Act would provide the state with the clear guidance and framework needed to facilitate the delivery of services via telehealth consistent with the standard of care of the state 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 state 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 from state to state. 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 State of Washington, particularly for rural and underserved areas and areas experiencing provider shortages, 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 states



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 Senate Health & Long Term Care Committee to support this legislation.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to working with you on this important effort. Please contact Casey Osgood at 203-536-5865 or casey.osgood@connectwithcare.org with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Krista Drobac".

Krista Drobac
Executive Director
Alliance for Connected Care