February XX, 2025

The Honorable John Thune Senate Majority Leader United States Senate Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer Senate Minority Leader United States Senate Washington, DC 20510 The Honorable Mike Johnson

Speaker of the House United States Capitol Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries

Minority Leader United States Capitol Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senate Majority Leader Thune, Minority Leader Schumer, Speaker Johnson, and House Minority Leader Jeffries:

On behalf of the signatories below, we thank you for your ongoing efforts to advance access to health care through telehealth. We write today to request your leadership in ensuring Americans are able to access the same telehealth that they were able to utilize in 2024 in the future. We strongly urge you to take action in March to establish permanent or long-term access to telehealth.

Both patients and practitioners seek assurance that services will remain available. Enhanced access to telehealth services serves as a lifeline to patients across the country, allowing patients to access critical health care services even when they have barriers to accessing in-person care, such as weakened immune systems, transportation challenges, geographic distance, and more.

Telehealth is a bipartisan policy, as demonstrated by the broadly supported <u>2022 legislation</u> which extended telehealth flexibilities through 2024. While our priority is legislation that would establish permanent telehealth policies, we recognize achieving this goal could be a multi-year process. Therefore, it is crucial that Congress take action to restore the telehealth access lost in December and prevent the loss of Medicare telehealth services in March.

As mentioned in <u>previous letters</u>, ensuring stability for telehealth policy would:

- Provide certainty for Medicare beneficiaries (and the Medicare program), who will otherwise wonder if they will have continued access to clinicians and services they are using virtually.
- Strengthen our national health care workforce by enabling greater number of clinicians to provide telehealth services and allowing for investment in flexible virtual staffing models that address current workforce shortages while maintaining high quality health care.
- Encourage ongoing investment in the technology tools and infrastructure to offer telehealth services, particularly for smaller providers serving rural and underserved communities who cannot afford to invest in these tools without an ensured reimbursement pathway.
- Allow health plans and employers to design and offer benefits leveraging telehealth services particularly for high-deductible health plans offering discounted telehealth services.

Telehealth is a strongly supported, bipartisan issue. It is crucial that both the House and Senate pass permanent or long-term telehealth provisions to ensure stable access to health care services.

Thank you for your leadership on this important issue.

Sincerely,