

TO: House Committee on Health Care

FROM: Jill Mazza Olson, Executive Director, VNAs of Vermont

DATE: April 4, 2017

RE: S.50: An act relating to insurance coverage for telemedicine services delivered in or outside a health care facility

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Thank you for the opportunity to testify last week on S.50.

Our members have extensive experience with health care provided in the home. In reviewing the bill as passed by the Senate, our members observed the following:

- 1) Some individuals may need assistance setting up telemedicine equipment or software in their homes;
- 2) Some frail or homebound individuals will need assistance holding telemedicine equipment or directing a camera to an area that a primary care provider would like to examine;
- 3) Medicare-certified home health agencies already have staff in the community who set up telemonitors and instruct patients in their use and have relationships with patients;
- 4) Home health agencies could further extend primary care into the home, reducing the need for scarce transportation services and facilitating earlier access to primary care services.

We believe insurance coverage for such in-home facilitation of telemedicine is something that should be explored further.

We respectfully request that the House Committee on Human Services include a provision in S.50 requesting the VNAs of Vermont, in consultation with health plans, the Department of Vermont Health Access, the Blueprint for Health, Vermont accountable care organizations and organizations representing primary care practices, review existing literature and consider whether and under what circumstances payers should reimburse home health agencies to assist and support telemedicine visits for individuals and report back to the committees of jurisdiction by December 15, 2017.