

TO: Vermont House of Representatives Committee on Health Care
RE: Telemedicine Bills

March 16, 2017

Dear Representatives Lippert, Donahue, Briglin, Christensen, Cina, Copeland-Hanzas, Dunn, Gage, Hebert, Houghton, and Jickling:

As a Licensed Clinical Mental Health Counselor in private practice, working with patients in Franklin County, I am writing to express my support for the current **Telemedicine Bills** in your committee: H.118 and S.50. Expanding telemedicine to include access from outside of a health care facility is key to providing equitable mental health and substance abuse services to patients, especially in rural areas, and those with transportation, health and certain mental health problems, which limit or prevent access to treatment. Not only is this important to quality of life for patients, it also would save on medical, mental health and societal costs – a win-win for everyone involved.

In particular, I support the inclusion of two sections of the Senate Bill:

1. Chapter 76 (5): Originating Site Location "...including...the patient's home or another non-medical environment such as a school-based health center, a university-based health center, or the patient's workplace." In addition to the above-mentioned reasons, I specialize in treating professionals who provide services to others and do not want to run into their own patients, clients or constituents in the waiting room. Therefore, they often do not seek necessary counseling services. We need to support our health providers, criminal justice personnel and leaders, so they may most effectively help others.
2. Chapter 76 (N): the inclusion of "a dietician certified pursuant to 26 V.S.A. Chapter 73." One of my specializations is eating disorders. Nutrition services are severely lacking in my county. I refer most of these clients to Burlington and Williston. Many cannot make the trip, and therefore do not receive necessary services. This leads to increased medical and mental health costs, and more suffering for the patient.

Please contact me or my husband and business partner, Former State Representative Michel Consejo, if you would like more information, or if we can help in any way.

Sincerely,

Tammie Consejo, Licensed Clinical Mental Health Counselor
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cc: Bill Sponsors, Co-sponsors & Franklin County Delegation