



May 6th, 2020

Dear Chair Senator Lyons and members of the Senate Finance Committee,

It is an honor to give testimony to you today on behalf of the VANP regarding tele-health in Vermont during the Covid-19 pandemic. Our naturopathic physicians have been taking up the charge to provide needed primary care services to Vermonters.

Overall we feel that tele-health has been a success for both the patients as well as the providers. There have been some issues however, as expected with any new endeavor that was taken up quickly.

In our practice where we are 99% telehealth, we have seen roughly 80% of our patients have broadband or cell service issues (video freezes), roughly 5-10% have had difficulty with accessing a video either due to not having camera access or because they couldn't figure out how to use it, and therefore have had to use a phone only.

Roughly 95% of our patients have had difficulty getting started the first time on telemedicine. On average it has taken us 5-7 minutes to help every patient on their first visit use the link and then get their audio and video working properly, thus causing patients to run over time.

As this Covid-19 Pandemic will likely continue to affect us in Vermont for the duration of 2020 and likely into 2021, we need to ensure that our plans to support telehealth keep this in mind.

Our big asks today are: 1) Please continue to guarantee equal pay for telemedicine visits as if they were in-office visits until 12/31/20, and 2) Please help to increase high-quality internet and cell service to Vermonters.

Thank you for your service, and for hearing my testimony today. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Joshua Green ND
President VANP