

Hello House Health Care Committee members,

I am writing to request your support for continued payment for phone-only medical services even after the state of emergency ends. As a primary care pediatrician in central Vermont, the ability to provide care via telehealth has been so important in reaching my patients during the pandemic, but has also allowed improved care and follow up for a myriad of diagnosis, including mental health, child development and asthma to name just a few. These visits prior to telehealth might not have happened as families would not make the time, or not happen as quickly again due to timing and availability of transportation.

As you know, in Vermont, not everyone has the ability to access video chat platforms for many reasons, both not having access to broadband due to location or cost, being unable to manage the technology, or afford the technology, which becomes a health equity issue. Some mental health patients are also not comfortable speaking on video.

Continuing payment at the same rate for telehealth and telephone only visits is extremely important for us to be able to maintain the ability to provide these visits. These visits often take more time to coordinate and staff due to technology glitches, and the standard of care is the same as in office no matter the modality, and we are very capable and skilled now in screening appointments to determine which visits can be done via telehealth and telephone only.

So please, continue to support payment parity for phone-only and telehealth medical services even post state of emergency to allow us to continue to provide the best care possible for our patients and to be compensated appropriately for that care.

Please don't hesitate to reach out with questions.

Sincerely,

Ashley Miller, MD FAAP

[South Royalton Health Center](#) 