



COLORADO

House of Medicine

May 27, 2020

Members of Senate and House Leadership:

Sen. Garcia, Senate President

Sen. Fenberg, Senate Majority Leader

Sen. Holbert, Senate Minority Leader

Rep. Becker, Speaker of the House

Rep. Garnett, House Majority Leader

Rep. Neville, House Minority Leader

200 E. Colfax Ave.
Denver, CO 80203

Dear Sen./Rep.:

On behalf of the Colorado Medical Society (CMS) and the Colorado House of Medicine (HOM), I am writing to thank you for your continued work throughout this public health crisis to preserve the health and wellbeing of all Coloradans. We are concerned, though, that those efforts may go by the wayside if advances in telehealth are not kept in place. As frontline physicians, we have seen firsthand the impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on patients and their families. While the toll has been profound, our resolve to provide high-quality, cost-effective care to Coloradans has not diminished.

We know that as state leaders, you, too, are facing daunting challenges and making painful choices. We greatly appreciate your commitment to supporting frontline health care providers during this crisis. As the legislative session resumes, we urge you to keep access to care as a top priority. In line with CMS policy supporting the use of telehealth and the modernization of telehealth laws, **we strongly recommend continued support of recently expanded telehealth coverage in both Medicaid and the commercial health insurance market in order to maintain access for all patients.**

Demand for telehealth surged 50% nationwide in March alone. Results from a soon-to-be-released HOM poll will show that a third of Colorado physicians ramped up existing telehealth services and two-thirds of physicians started new telehealth services to meet growing demand. While the current public health emergency was the stimulus to increased use of telehealth,



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patients and providers alike have come to see how telehealth allows individuals to access timely, high-quality, safe, cost-effective care. Even more significant are the benefits seen in terms of greater access for our most vulnerable patients, rural communities, and to scarce specialists. Patients will continue to demand this kind of access and providers, who have invested in implementing new telemedicine systems, need to be reimbursed adequately in order to enable them to continue to provide these valuable services (audio-visual, audio-only, and e-consults). Convenient, statewide, safe access to high-quality, cost-effective care that can keep patients out of the hospital and give all Coloradans the care they deserve and demand is more important than ever.

However, our patients and physicians are now worried that these advances in access to care will be lost if telehealth coverage and payment rules revert to their pre-COVID-19 status. Please be on the lookout for a bill addressing these issues. We remain committed to engaging with you and other stakeholders on this topic. Thank you again for your service.

Sincerely,

David Markenson, MD, MBA
CMS President

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