



March 19, 2020

Secretary-Designee Andrea Palm
Wisconsin Department of Health Services
1 West Wilson Street, Room 650
Madison, WI 53703

Dear Secretary-Designee Palm:

On behalf of our members we want to thank you for your ongoing attention to the threat of a public health crisis in Wisconsin as a result of the spread of COVID-19. We appreciate the countless hours you and your staff are devoting to protecting the communities in which we live and work from the spread of COVID-19.

We write to you today with a request to expand Medicaid telehealth policy to include Speech Language Pathologists, Physical Therapists and Occupational Therapists as allowable providers. Even before COVID-19 became a public health emergency, health care providers were increasingly utilizing telehealth as a service delivery model to improve access to essential healthcare. We believe this policy change is a reasonable and timely request given recent action by the U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to ease restrictions on telehealth services for Medicare. In addition, we believe 2019 Wisconsin Act 56 gives the Department broad authority to include telehealth services provided by the aforementioned providers as a reimbursable benefit under the Medicaid Program. The Department should also consider waiving prior authorization requirements in fee-for-service programs to ensure timely delivery of care and treatment for some of the most vulnerable populations. We are happy to provide guidance documents to the Department to assist in the development of appropriate policy.

Understandably you are managing a great deal of requests and are responding as quickly as possible to community, provider and patient needs. These changes will help to ensure the capacity of the state's health care system and better meet the needs of our patients and communities during this time of uncertainty. We respectfully request swift action in effort to help blunt the spread of COVID-19 and to protect the health and safety of practitioners while still meeting the needs of our patients across the State of Wisconsin.

Respectfully,

Wisconsin Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology Association
Wisconsin Physical Therapy Association
Wisconsin Occupational Therapy Association

cc: Governor Tony Evers
State Medicaid Director Jim Jones