

Submitted via email

May 21, 2021

The Honorable Steve Daines
United States Senate
320 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senate
313 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senators Daines and Cortez Masto:

On behalf of the Partnership to Advance Virtual Care (PAVC), I am writing to express our support for the Telehealth Expansion Act, a bill to permanently extend the safe harbor for telehealth services from certain high deductible health plan (HDHP) requirements.

The COVID-19 pandemic has underscored many of the vulnerabilities in our healthcare system, while also spurring innovation in care delivery to meet the challenges presented. Over the course of the ongoing Public Health Emergency (PHE), telehealth has expanded access to care, allowed patients to be treated safely without the risk of additional COVID-19 exposure, has increased convenience, and lowered out of pocket costs for patients. PAVC is pleased to support Congressional action that extends the safe harbor created under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act of 2020 to allow HDHP participants to have coverage for telehealth services on a pre-deductible basis, allowing them to continue to make contributions to health savings accounts (HSA).

Section 3701 of the CARES Act created a [safe harbor](#) that allowed individuals with HSA-eligible HDHPs to have telehealth covered on a first-dollar basis without having to first meet their deductible. Roughly 51 percent of workers in the U.S. have a HDHP. As a result, millions of workers were able to access quality care conveniently, remotely and affordably, mitigating the spread of COVID-19 and ensuring continued access to routine healthcare. For many individuals, this was not only a vital tool for staying safe, but it also helped individuals access care that many employers waived fair market value charges on. However, without action from Congress, this waiver will end on December 31, 2021.

The Telehealth Expansion Act will ensure continued access to telehealth services and will allow employers to avoid subjecting employees to mid-year changes in benefits that could result in unexpected costs and disruption in care, especially for employers with off-calendar year plans. In furtherance of allowing more individuals to access affordable, reliable care we support this

bill to make permanent the waiver allowing pre-deductible coverage for telehealth visits for HDHP plans.

We appreciate your leadership on this effort. Please do not hesitate to contact us with additional questions.

Sincerely,



Mara McDermott
The Partnership to Advance Virtual Care

98point6
AdvancedMD
Adventist Health Policy Association
Amita Health
Ascension
Doctor On Demand
Fresenius Medical Care NA
LifePoint Health
The Mayo Clinic
Sentara Healthcare
Teladoc Health

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The Partnership to Advance Virtual Care (PAVC) focuses the collective voice of industry stakeholders to secure necessary regulatory and legislative changes to improve the telehealth regulatory and reimbursement landscape. PAVC is currently composed of health systems, health IT vendors, innovators, chronic care specialists, and primary care stakeholders. Each of the current participants in PAVC has a leading voice in telehealth and resounding influence in Washington, DC. With a diverse group of participants, PAVC is equipped to evaluate complex considerations, such as maintaining quality and access to care when expanding telehealth services, and produce sound policy solutions based on robust data analytics.