



November 16, 2021

The Honorable Bill Cassidy
520 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tina Smith
720 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Ben Cardin
509 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Thune
511 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Cassidy, Smith, Cardin, and Thune:

On behalf of the College of Psychiatric and Neurologic Pharmacists (CPNP), I write to express our support for the *Telemental Health Care Access Act of 2021* (S. 2061). We thank you for your leadership in introducing bipartisan legislation to eliminate an unnecessary barrier for Medicare beneficiaries in accessing mental and behavioral health services through telehealth. We have seen the importance of telehealth during the COVID-19 pandemic in providing access to these critically important services.

CPNP is a professional association of nearly 3,000 board certified and residency trained clinical pharmacists that specialize in psychiatry, substance use disorder, psychopharmacology, and neurology. Psychiatric pharmacists provide telemental health and substance use disorder services as members of the health care team. Telehealth services were provided by psychiatric pharmacists prior to the COVID pandemic, particularly with patients in rural and underserved areas. Telehealth visits with a psychiatric pharmacist typically include the provision of comprehensive medication management (CMM) services involving prescribing medications and managing all medications to optimize outcomes, address drug interactions, and promote adherence to therapies.

CPNP believes that barriers to telehealth for mental health and substance use services should be minimal. Some people with mental health conditions have symptoms that interfere with their ability to attend in-person appointments, such as anxiety or agoraphobia, such that they may prefer telehealth visits for all of their visits. CPNP strongly supports the removal of the 6-month in-person visit requirement and believes it should be left up to the treating clinician to determine the best interval for their patients to be seen in person if needed.

CPNP stands ready to assist you in securing passage of this bill. Please do not hesitate to contact me or our Health Policy Consultant, Laura Hanen at laura.hanen@faegredrinker.com.

Sincerely

Brenda K. Schimenti, Executive Director
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