

September 23, 2025

The Honorable John Thune
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Majority Leader Thune, Minority Leader Schumer, Speaker Johnson, and Minority Leader Jeffries:

On behalf of the Mental Health Liaison Group (MHLG), a coalition of national organizations representing individuals and families experiencing mental health and substance use challenges, mental health and substance use treatment providers, advocates, and other stakeholders committed to retaining telehealth flexibilities for Americans, we urge you to establish a 2-year or permanent extension of Medicare telehealth flexibilities.

The expansion of telehealth has been a cornerstone in improving access to mental health care, helping to alleviate gaps exposed by workforce shortages. This has been particularly true for patients in rural or underserved areas and patients who face other barriers to in-person care. Over the last several years, patients have shown high satisfaction with telehealth and a decrease in no-show rates, which is clinically important for timely and effective treatment. A 2024 study found that telemedicine appointments were associated with 64% higher odds of completion than in-person care appointments.¹ Being able to keep appointments is a strong indicator of eventual patient outcomes – receiving timely care, without delay or disruption, allows for better management of conditions and can prevent the worsening of conditions.

The MHLG commends the bipartisan work of Congress over the last several years to extend certain pandemic-related telehealth capabilities, including waivers to geographic and originating site restrictions, expansions to the list of eligible practitioners, eligibilities for federally qualified health centers and rural health clinics, and allowing telehealth to be provided through audio-only telecommunications. Crucially, these extensions also delayed implementation of the in-person

¹ Cummins MR, Tsalatsanis A, Chaphalkar C, Ivanova J, Ong T, Soni H, Barrera JF, Wilczewski H, Welch BM, Bunnell BE. Telemedicine appointments are more likely to be completed than in-person healthcare appointments: a retrospective cohort study. JAMIA Open. 2024 Jul 13;7(3):ooae059. doi: 10.1093/jamiaopen/ooae059. PMID: 39006216; PMCID: PMC11245742.

visit requirement before a patient receives tele-mental health services, a barrier unique to behavioral health care.

With current flexibilities set to expire on October 1, it is crucial Congress passes at least a 2-year extension. Both patients and practitioners seek assurance that services will remain available and that they will face no lapses in care.

We thank you for your leadership and stand ready to serve as a resource on this issue.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Nursing

American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy

American Association for Psychoanalysis in Clinical Social Work

American Association of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

American Association of Psychiatric Pharmacists

American Association on Health and Disability

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention

American Nurses Association

American Psychiatric Association

American Psychiatric Nurses Association

American Psychological Association Services

Anxiety and Depression Association of America

Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness

Centerstone

Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder

Clinical Social Work Association

Crisis Text Line

Employee Assistance Professionals Association

Fountain House

Global Alliance for Behavioral Health & Social Justice

Inseparable

International OCD Foundation

International Society of Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurses

Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute

Mental Health America

National Alliance on Mental Illness

National Association for Behavioral Healthcare

National Association for Rural Mental Health (NARMH)

National Association of County Behavioral Health and Developmental Disability Directors
(NACBHDD)

National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners

National Association of Social Workers
National Council for Mental Wellbeing
National Federation of Families
National League for Nursing
National Register of Health Service Psychologists
Network of Jewish Human Service Agencies
Postpartum Support International
Psychotherapy Action Network (PsiAN)
REDC Consortium
The National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health
Western Youth Services