

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Resolution HHH-21-01

A RESOLUTION ON REMOTE HEALTHCARE ACCESSIBILITY

WHEREAS, the National Black Caucus of State Legislators (NBCSL) has long been committed to improving the health and wellbeing of all our constituents, including many in our community that have historically faced a lack of access to affordable quality care;

WHEREAS, enabling the use of all forms of telehealth, including video, audio and store-and-forward platforms, has tremendous potential to connect more people of color to primary care and other healthcare services;

WHEREAS, the NBCSL recognizes that telehealth cannot always replace in person office visits for all healthcare visits, and that a patient and their healthcare provider should safely decide what is the correct option for the patient;

WHEREAS, there are other forms of remote medicine, such as the physicians and other healthcare practitioners that travel into underserved communities, or using new devices to monitor patient health;

WHEREAS, long-standing systemic health and social inequities have put racial and ethnic minority groups at increased risk of getting COVID-19 or experiencing severe illness, regardless of age;

WHEREAS, COVID-19 has devastated the black community, with new data showing that the [COVID-19 mortality rate is 2.4 times higher for Black Americans than it is for White Americans](#), and 2.2 times as high as the mortality rate of Asians and Latinx groups;

WHEREAS, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that linking more people to healthcare services and affordable medicines as a way to reduce the impact of COVID-19 on racial and ethnic minority populations;

WHEREAS, telehealth can be delivered both in real time and asynchronously, where the patient and doctor determine the best instance for these interactions, and

WHEREAS, the NBCSL seeks to bring clarity to telehealth laws, thereby expanding accessibility to these services, enhancing consumer choice, and increasing the affordability and efficiency of providing care, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Black Caucus of State Legislators (NBCSL) supports legislation to make quality healthcare more accessible in our communities;

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BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NBCSL supports efforts to healthcare into underserved communities by encouraging the quality substantive healthcare interactions through alternative and innovative models;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NBCSL encourages legislators to examine asynchronous telehealth as an opportunity to provide flexibility to underserved populations to interact with professionals;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NBCSL believes that all telehealth should be conducted with a qualified and credentialed professional that could provide the needed in-person follow-up services to that patient;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that such telehealth services should adhere to all patient privacy and safety laws; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States, the Vice President of the United States, members of the United States House of Representatives and the United States Senate, and other federal and state government officials and agencies as appropriate.

SPONSOR(S): Representative Harold M. Love, Jr. (TN), Representative Robin Shackleford (GA), Representative Karen Camper (TN), Senator Raumesh Akbari (TN), Representative Karen Bennett (GA), Representative Toni Rose (TX), and Assemblywoman Autumn R. Burke (CA)

Committee of Jurisdiction: Health and Human Services Policy Committee

Certified by Committee Co-Chairs: Representative David J. Mack, III (SC) and Senator Marilyn Moore (CT)

Ratified in Plenary Session: Ratification Date is December 3, 2020

Ratification is certified by: Representative Gilda Cobb-Hunter (SC), President