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Telemedicine Parity Legislation Introduced

Bill Will Improve Healthcare Access and Help Lower Costs

PHOENIX – Doctors and hospitals would be reimbursed for an expanded set of medical services provided via telemedicine under a new Senate Bill introduced today.

The legislation, introduced by Sens. Heather Carter and Kate Brophy McGee and Rep. Nancy Barto among others, recognizes the changing landscape in healthcare technology, with consumers demanding additional convenience when medically appropriate.

Currently, Arizona law limits telemedicine coverage to a handful of medical services. With this legislation, any healthcare service covered in-person by a commercial insurer will also be covered when provided through telemedicine.

“Arizona hospitals applaud Senator Carter and the other sponsors for their tireless work to ensure that Arizonans have access to the very best care no matter which community they live in,” said Greg Vigdor, President and CEO of the Arizona Hospital and Healthcare Association.

Pete Wertheim, executive director of the Arizona Osteopathic Medical Association, agreed. “This legislation is sorely needed for patients in medically underserved areas, especially in communities with limited access to critical specialty services,” he said. “Telemedicine is an invaluable tool to bolster physician capabilities through collaboration and use of technology.”

Libby McDannell, EVP and CEO of the Arizona Medical Association, said. “This bill is a sensible measure that will streamline access to care. With the availability of mobile electronic devices, it’s in the best interest of today’s patients and their physicians to make use of all the available tools to broaden and enhance the patient care experience.”

Tara Plese, Chief External Affairs Officer of the Arizona Alliance for Community Health Centers, added. “We support the use of telemedicine to improve health care access and help continue to improve the delivery of care at the right time and place for patients. We urge the legislature to continue to move this important piece of legislation through the process.”

Telemedicine—or telehealth—is the process by which patients can receive medical information and care through various electronic means from a remote practitioner, making medical and clinical expertise more convenient than ever before.

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