



December 2, 2022

The Honorable Ron Wyden
Chairman
Committee on Finance
United States Senate
219 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mike Crapo
Ranking Member
Committee on Finance
United States Senate
219 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Wyden and Ranking Member Crapo:

On behalf of The Joint Commission, I am writing to express support for a 2-year extension of waivers included in H.R. 4040, the Advancing Telehealth Beyond COVID-19 Act of 2021.

Founded in 1951, The Joint Commission seeks to continuously improve health care for the public in collaboration with other stakeholders, by evaluating health care organizations (HCO) and inspiring them to excel in providing safe and effective care of the highest quality and value. An independent, not-for-profit organization with a global presence, The Joint Commission has programs that accredit or certify more than 25,000 HCOs and programs in the United States. The Joint Commission evaluates across the continuum of care, including most of the nation's hospitals. Although accreditation is voluntary, a variety of federal and state government regulatory bodies, including the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, recognize The Joint Commission's decisions and findings for Medicare or licensure purposes.

The Joint Commission believes that a 2-year extension of the telehealth waiver flexibilities enacted during the COVID-19 public health emergency (PHE), such as eliminating originating site restrictions, is appropriate. Telehealth has been instrumental for patients throughout the pandemic because it has helped patients maintain access to their clinical team, provided a means to connect with specialists, particularly for those in need of mental and substance use disorder services, and created a platform for patients seeking care in the privacy of their home. Audio-only services have particularly helped patients in underserved communities who have limited broadband access, which makes it difficult to access video telehealth visits. These benefits highlight some of the many ways telehealth has become a critical tool for delivering care and why it should continue to be available once the PHE ends.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me or Tim Jones, Senior Associate Director, Federal Relations at 202-783-6655 or tjones2@jointcommission.org.

Sincerely,

Kathryn Spates, JD
Executive Director, Federal Relations