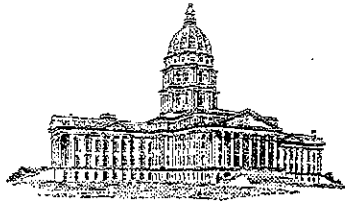


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PENSIONS & BENEFITS

Mr. Chairman and fellow committee members I appear before you this afternoon as a proponent of House Bill 2206, a bill designed to help further advance Telehealth services across Kansas. For the past 5 years, I have had an interest in Telehealth, in a large part due to seeing examples of what a provider in my district has been able to do with pilot Telemonitoring projects to improve health outcomes for patients with multiple chronic conditions, while at the same time saving substantial healthcare dollars.

Living in rural Kansas, my interest increased when the hospital closed in Independence, my hometown. Then it intensified when, as a member of the Rural Healthcare Working Group, it was established that Telehealth services will be increasingly needed in the future to bring needed healthcare options to residents of rural and frontier Kansas. The enhancement and spread of Telehealth Services, and new Telehealth legislation will be key components of the RHCWG final report.

It is my belief that HB 2206 is the legislation needed to expand Telehealth Services in Kansas and ensure the necessary payment parity to allow Telehealth to be viable in Kansas ... as HB 2206

- Ensures coverage and reimbursement parity for Telehealth-provided services under private insurance, that currently cover Telehealth services, as well as KanCare.
- Insures Telehealth providers are licensed in Kansas
- Upholds the required standard of care for all health care providers and prevents licensing boards from adopting more stringent standards for telehealth providers.

Telemedicine has been growing rapidly because it offers four fundamental benefits:

- **Improved Access** – For over 40 years, Telemedicine has been used to bring healthcare services to patients in distant locations. Not only does Telemedicine improve access to patients but it also allows physicians and health facilities to expand their reach, beyond their own offices. Given the provider shortages in both rural and urban areas, Telemedicine has a unique capacity to increase service options for new and existing patients.
- **Cost Efficiencies** – Reducing or containing the cost of healthcare is one of the most important reasons for funding and adopting telehealth technologies. Telemedicine has been shown to reduce the cost of healthcare and increase efficiency through better management of chronic diseases, shared health professional staffing, reduced travel times, and fewer or shorter hospital stays.
- **Improved Quality** – Studies have consistently shown that the quality of healthcare services delivered via Telemedicine are as good those given in traditional in-person consultations. In some specialties, particularly in mental health and ICU care, Telemedicine can often deliver a better product, with greater outcomes and patient satisfaction.