



336 STAKEHOLDERS SEEK LEADERSHIP FROM CONGRESS TO CREATE PERMANENT COMPREHENSIVE TELEHEALTH REFORM

WASHINGTON, DC, JANUARY 31, 2022 – Today, 336 organizations sent a letter to Congress urging their leadership in facilitating a pathway to comprehensive permanent telehealth reform that would provide certainty to patients and our nation’s healthcare providers while providing sufficient time for Congress and the administration to analyze the impact of telehealth on patient care. The letter was co-led by the Alliance for Connected Care, American Telemedicine Association (ATA), College of Healthcare Information Management Executives (CHIME), Consumer Technology Association (CTA), Executives for Health Innovation (EHI), Health Innovation Alliance, HIMSS, Partnership to Advance Virtual Care, and the Personal Connected Health Alliance (PCHAlliance).

While the Biden Administration may elect to extend the COVID-19 public health emergency (PHE), the fact that the PHE determination must be renewed every 90 days and could end later this year is creating significant uncertainty for the U.S. healthcare system. The letter calls for Congress to advance permanent telehealth reform focused on the following specific priorities:

- Authorize the continuation of all current telehealth waivers through December 31, 2024;
- Require HHS to complete all feasible evaluations related to telehealth by fall 2023 and combine findings into a single overarching dashboard with recommendations to inform permanent telehealth legislation by Congress; and
- Pass permanent, evidence-based telehealth legislation for implementation in 2024.

Virtual care is now a fundamental part of the U.S. healthcare system, and it will improve patient access to high-quality care well beyond the COVID-19 pandemic. Patient satisfaction surveys and claims data from CMS and private health plans demonstrate that many Americans have come to see telehealth as one of the most positive improvements to our nation’s healthcare system in recent memory. Importantly, [a majority of U.S. voters](#) believe Congress should protect their ability and choice to see a provider via telehealth post-pandemic.

Download the letter [here](#).

The following quotes are from the organizations co-leading the letter:

“Congress must act to provide more certainty to beneficiaries and healthcare providers alike, while ensuring sufficient time is taken to analyze the impact of telehealth on patient care throughout the pandemic to inform permanent telehealth reform,” said Krista Drobac, Executive Director, **Alliance for Connected Care**. “Extending the current telehealth waivers – both those authorized by Congress and those allowed under presidential emergency powers – are critical to ensure patients can continue to access needed healthcare services and to allow providers to continue utilizing the telehealth infrastructure implemented throughout the pandemic.”

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“Now is the time to give certainty to the millions of Americans who have come to rely on virtual care and give healthcare providers the tools they need to continue to deliver uninterrupted, quality care to their patients,” said Kyle Zebley, Vice President, Public Policy, **American Telemedicine Association (ATA)** and Executive Director, **ATA Action**. “This is a pivotal moment for Congress to act and secure a bipartisan win, while taking much-needed steps to modernize our healthcare system. The ATA pledges to continue to do all we can to work with our Congressional telehealth champions to secure passage of telehealth provisions as soon as possible.”

“Throughout the course of the pandemic, we have heard a chorus of support from our members related to the success they are experiencing with telehealth and its reported widespread use and support by patients. Keeping the telehealth waivers in place through 2024 will ensure that patients and providers will not abruptly lose access to this successful care delivery method, while giving Congress additional time to work on comprehensive telehealth reform,” noted Russell Branzell, President & CEO, **CHIME**.

“The pandemic has shown the transformative role virtual care can play in our overall healthcare system, especially ensuring quality care is accessible to as many people as possible. The waivers were a key part in allowing healthcare providers to meet patients where they live, and we risk reversing the great progress we have seen if we go back to the way things were prior to the pandemic,” said René Quashie, Vice President, Policy and Regulatory Affairs, Digital Health, **Consumer Technology Association**.

“EHI is proud to join in leading this effort to urge Congress to act now on telehealth,” said Jen Covich Bordenick, CEO, **Executives for Health Innovation (EHI)**. “The waivers currently in place have been crucial in allowing patients to access care when and where they need it during this unprecedented time. We cannot risk an abrupt end to these waivers at the end of the COVID-19 public health emergency period. Congress must act to extend these waivers so telehealth can continue while working toward permanent reform.”

“Congress should give seniors the option to use telehealth beyond this pandemic with a clean expansion through the end of 2024. This action will give certainty that these services will continue while working towards the ultimate goal of permanent reform,” said Brett Meeks, **Health Innovation Alliance**.

“When the COVID-19 pandemic began exposing gaps in our healthcare system, telehealth enabled critical access to high-quality care for patients and providers alike. Over the past two years, millions of Americans have gained firsthand experience with the benefits of telehealth and other virtual care tools, and they want to keep those benefits,” said Tom Leary, Senior Vice President and Head of Government Relations, **HIMSS**. “With so much uncertainty remaining around telehealth permanence, we now call on Congress to ensure millions of Americans don’t lose access to this care and to take action to enact comprehensive telehealth reform.”

“As Congress works toward a pathway for comprehensive telehealth reform, it is essential that current telehealth waivers be extended through at least 2024,” said Mara McDermott, Executive Director, **Partnership to Advance Virtual Care**. “Patients and providers alike need more certainty in care planning than afforded to them through the extension of the PHE every 90 days.”

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