

January 31, 2023

The Honorable Julie Slama  
Chairperson  
Banking, Commerce and Insurance Committee  
Nebraska Legislature  
Room 1401  
P.O. Box 94604  
Lincoln, NE 68509

Re: **AMA Support of LB 256**

Dear Chairperson Slama:

On behalf of the American Medical Association (AMA) and our physician and medical student members, I am writing to express our **strong support of Legislative Bill 256 (LB 256)**, which strengthens Nebraska's existing laws on telehealth to ensure payment for a service provided via telehealth is the same as a comparable in-person service. The AMA supports fair and equitable payment policies for telehealth, recognizing that such laws support physician investment and integration of telehealth in their practice. These laws also support patient access to telehealth, including care via telehealth from their regular physician who also provides in-person care. The AMA believes that physician payments should be comparable whether the service is performed via audio-only, two-way audio-video, or in-person. As such, we stand in strong support of LB 256 which will ensure continued access to high-quality telehealth for Nebraska's patients. If Nebraska passes LB 256, it will join more than half of states that have passed telehealth payment parity legislation.

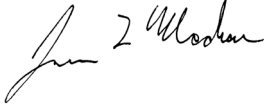
Patients and physicians have come to trust and value care provided via telehealth. For example, telehealth improves patient satisfaction by decreasing travel time to their physician's office and reducing or eliminating the need to take time off work and/or seek alternative childcare. Similarly, physicians have embraced telehealth as an additional tool to provide care to their patients. Telehealth has been especially helpful in supporting follow-up care, improving medication adherence, and reducing patient visits to the emergency department or urgent care; thereby increasing the quality of care and potentially reducing overall health care costs.

Research has shown that over the past two years telehealth has been largely substitutive, rather than additive, for in-person care. In fact, the vast majority of physicians who provide telehealth continue to provide in-person care and have made significant investments to fully integrate telehealth into their practices as an option for patients when clinically appropriate. These "hybrid physicians" offer the best of both worlds. This allows them to deliver the right care, via the most accessible and appropriate modality, at the right time. When providing telehealth, physicians often use the same clinical and non-clinical staff who deliver in-person services and may even incur additional costs associated with telehealth care delivery (e.g., technology support staff, telehealth platforms, and additional data privacy and security measures). Laws that support fair and equitable payment for telehealth ensure physicians can continue providing this valuable service to their patients.

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For these reasons, the AMA strongly encourages you to support LB 256, a vital bill that protects patient access to high-quality telehealth. If you have any questions, please contact Kim Horvath, JD, Senior Attorney, AMA Advocacy Resource Center, at [kimberly.horvath@ama-assn.org](mailto:kimberly.horvath@ama-assn.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim L Madara". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and "M".

James L. Madara, MD

cc: Nebraska Medical Association