



JAMES L. MADARA, MD
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT, CEO

ama-assn.org
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March 27, 2017

The Honorable David Howard
Chair
Public Health, Welfare and Safety Committee
Montana Senate
PO Box 200500
Helena, MT 59620-0500

Re: AMA support for Montana House Bill 389

Dear Chair Howard:

On behalf of the American Medical Association (AMA) and our physician and student members, I am writing to express our **support of Montana House Bill (HB) 389**, which establishes a set of safeguards and standards to support the appropriate use of telemedicine.

Telemedicine, a key innovation in support of health care delivery reform, is being used in initiatives to improve access to care, care coordination and quality, as well as to reduce the rate of growth in health care spending. The AMA supports policies that more broadly encourage the delivery of telemedicine, allowing physicians to more easily and readily connect their patients to consultations and other services through a telecommunications device.

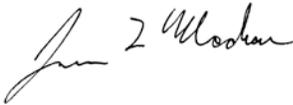
The proliferation of telemedicine technologies does not mean that the professional standard of medical care has changed. As telemedicine continues to evolve, with a growing number of services being provided via telemedicine technologies, the AMA firmly believes that there is a need for a set of safeguards and standards to support the appropriate use of telemedicine services. Such standards and safeguards also need to support future innovation in the use of telemedicine, while ensuring patient safety, quality of care and the privacy of patient information, as well as protecting the patient-physician relationship and promoting improved care coordination and communication with medical homes.

In particular, HB 389 aligns with AMA policy in its requirement that a physician utilize an in-person visit, two-way audio-visual interaction, or store-and-forward technology to establish a relationship with a new patient via telemedicine, or meet certain exceptions like emergency situations. We encourage you to preserve these important patient protections as HB 389 moves forward.

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The AMA appreciates the Montana Legislature's efforts to clarify the parameters by which physicians can safely treat the patients of your state via telemedicine, and thanks you for the opportunity to submit these comments. If you have any questions, please contact Kristin Schleiter, JD, LLM, Senior Legislative Attorney, Advocacy Resource Center, at kristin.schleiter@ama-assn.org or (312) 464-4783.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Jim L Madara".

James L. Madara, MD

cc: Montana Medical Association