



The Maryland State Medical Society  
1211 Cathedral Street  
Baltimore, MD 21201-5516  
410.539.0872  
Fax: 410.547.0915  
1.800.492.1056  
www.medchi.org

American Academy of Pediatrics  
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Maryland Chapter



MID-ATLANTIC ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS  
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4483-B Forbes Boulevard  
Forbes Center Building II  
Lanham, Maryland 20706



TO: The Honorable Shane E. Pendergrass, Chair  
Members, House Health and Government Operations Committee  
The Honorable Eric M. Bromwell

FROM: Pamela Metz Kasemeyer  
J. Steven Wise  
Danna L. Kauffman

DATE: February 23, 2017

RE: **SUPPORT** – House Bill 658 – *Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Telehealth – Requirements*

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On behalf of the Maryland State Medical Society, the Maryland Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the Mid-Atlantic Association of Community Health Centers, we submit this letter of **support** for House Bill 658 which removes all barriers to the provision of telehealth services under Medicaid.

The General Assembly has recognized that the use of telemedicine services holds great promise for addressing access to care challenges. While the initial focus of its use was on access to specialty care, it has been widely recognized that the full range of health care services can be appropriately provided through telemedicine, including primary care and behavioral health services. Originally referred to as “telemedicine” it more appropriately should be referred to as “telehealth” as reflected in House Bill 658.

Historically, there has been a concern that the expansion of the use of telehealth services will increase costs to the program. However, the experience in other states where Medicaid has long reimbursed for telemedicine, and with commercial carriers, has demonstrated that the fiscal impact is minimal and does not account for the savings that could result from increased access to high quality services that are currently unavailable. Passage of House Bill 658 will ensure that the full continuum of telehealth services are covered under the Medicaid program. A favorable report is requested.

**For more information call:**  
Pamela Metz Kasemeyer  
J. Steven Wise  
Danna L. Kauffman  
410-244-7000