



Bipartisan Bill Would Expand and Strengthen Coverage for Telehealth Services

House Representatives Dean Phillips (D-MN) and Steve Chabot (R-OH) introduced the bipartisan Telehealth Coverage and Payment Equity Act (H.R. 4480), a bill that would expand and make permanent the temporary coverage of telehealth services currently provided under Medicare.

If enacted, the bill would require group health plans and health insurance issuers to:

- Cover the same telehealth services that are currently covered under Medicare;

- Establish payment parity between in-person and telehealth covered services, including cost-sharing requirements, such as deductibles, coinsurance, and copayments;
- Guarantee that all medically necessary benefits in ERISA-governed health plans are covered via telehealth;
- Eliminate the requirement that a health care provider must have a prior relationship with the individual seeking care before providing telehealth services; and
- Eliminate location-based restrictions on health care providers.

The bill would also allow group health plans and health insurance issuers to waive any cost-sharing requirements for any telehealth items or services related to the diagnosis and treatment of COVID-19.

The bill defines a “qualifying telecommunications system” as “a system that includes, at a minimum, audio capabilities permitting two-way, real-time interactive communication between the individual receiving an eligible service . . . and the health care provider, and may include the use of a telephone, videoconferencing system, internet communications system, or streaming media communications system.”

“It’s time to build a 21st century health care system that utilizes new technology developed throughout the COVID-19 pandemic to keep people well,” said Rep. Phillips. “For many conditions, there is simply no reason for health care to be tied to brick and mortar institutions. Telehealth has allowed us to effectively deliver care during the pandemic, but some of the flexibilities put in place to ensure Americans have access to care will be reversed when the public health emergency expires unless Congress acts to preserve them.”

[Full text of H.R. 4480 \(Congress.gov\)](#)

[Full text of press release \(Rep. Dean Phillips\)](#)

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