

MAR 07 2023

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO PERFORM A FEASIBILITY STUDY
OF THE BENEFITS OF AUTHORIZING REIMBURSEMENT FOR SERVICES
PROVIDED THROUGH TELEHEALTH BY WAY OF AUDIO-ONLY TELEPHONIC
COMMUNICATION.

1 WHEREAS, telehealth has served as a lifeline of access to
2 essential health care services for residents with adequate
3 broadband coverage and offers an affordable, convenient option
4 for patients; and

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6 WHEREAS, however, many Hawaii residents who live in rural
7 and underprivileged communities are often cut off from receiving
8 essential health care through telehealth because they lack the
9 broadband coverage necessary to access this care; and

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11 WHEREAS, furthermore, elderly residents and others who may
12 have limited digital literacy may have difficulties accessing
13 telehealth services through the Internet; and

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15 WHEREAS, the use of standard telephone contact in
16 telehealth during the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated the
17 effectiveness of this tool as a mode of essential health care
18 delivery, especially for residents living in rural, isolated,
19 and underprivileged communities; and

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21 WHEREAS, medical professionals have used standard telephone
22 contacts for decades to provide necessary access to primary care
23 when a patient is homebound or otherwise unable to access in-
24 person or face-to-face care; and

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26 WHEREAS, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services
27 continues to authorize coverage of audio-only (telephone)
28 telehealth services used in the treatment of mental health and
29 substance abuse in certain circumstances, allowing federally



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1 qualified health centers and rural health clinics to use
2 telehealth to care for patients in patients' homes; and

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4 WHEREAS, it is important to ensure equitable access to
5 telephonic and telehealth services for patients who are covered
6 by private insurance with those who are covered by managed care
7 plans; and

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9 WHEREAS, developing a provider reimbursement system that
10 also incorporates reimbursement for telephonic services,
11 including audio-only communication, would increase access to and
12 encourage greater utilization of mental health services through
13 telephonic telehealth; now, therefore,

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15 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-second
16 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2023, the
17 House of Representatives concurring, that the Department of
18 Health is urged to perform a feasibility study of the benefits
19 of authorizing reimbursement for services provided through
20 telehealth by way of audio-only telephonic communication; and

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22 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Health is
23 urged to report to the Legislature with the results of its
24 feasibility study, including any proposed legislation, no later
25 than twenty days prior to the Regular Session of 2024; and

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27 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a certified copy of this
28 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Director of Health.

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31 OFFERED BY:  _____

