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AMERICAN TELEMEDICINE ASSOCIATION APPLAUDS IMPORTANT NEW *TELEMENTAL HEALTH CARE ACCESS ACT*, REPEALING PROBLEMATIC IN-PERSON REQUIREMENT FOR TELEMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

WASHINGTON, DC, JUNE 15, 2021 – Immediately becoming a top legislative priority, the [American Telemedicine Association](#) (ATA) enthusiastically endorses the new bipartisan Telemental Health Care Access Act introduced today by long-time telehealth champions Senators Bill Cassidy (R-LA), Tina Smith (D-MN), Ben Cardin (D-MD) and John Thune (R-SD). This important legislation would repeal the problematic in-person requirement for telemental services that was signed into law as part of the end-of-year package last December.

“Our highest praise and gratitude to Senators Cassidy, Smith, Cardin and Thune for their steady leadership and clear priority to bring telehealth services to the American people, including those in rural and underserved communities,” said Ann Mond Johnson, CEO of the ATA. “The Telemental Health Care Access Act is a critical piece of legislation that would repeal the telemental health in-person requirement. Passing this legislation, and ensuring this unnecessary requirement is not repeated for other services, along with other pieces of legislation that make the telehealth waivers permanent, could not be a higher priority for the ATA and our members.”

There is no clinical evidence for an arbitrary in-person requirement before a patient can access telehealth services. In fact, evidence has demonstrated that telemental health services like telepsychology are just as effective as in-person visits.

The ATA published a new brief on [in-person requirements](#) for telehealth, detailing the barriers to care created by this arbitrary law that are contrary to clinical consensus, exacerbate provider shortages, worsens health inequities, and unnecessarily preempt state laws.

“The ATA strongly opposes statutory in-person requirements as they create arbitrary and clinically unsupported barriers to accessing affordable, quality health care. Requirements such as these could negatively impact those in underserved communities who may not be able to have an in-person exam,” added Mond Johnson. “We simply cannot ignore the importance of providing all Americans, regardless of whether they have an established relationship with a medical provider, the opportunity to access life-saving health care.

“The ATA is very proud to collaborate with our Senate champions and enthusiastically endorse this important bill. This is a major step forward for and we will continue to work with policymakers to ensure that telehealth becomes a permanent treatment modality in healthcare delivery. We urge our members and other stakeholders to join us in endorsing this important legislation.”

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About the ATA

As the only organization completely focused on advancing telehealth, the [American Telemedicine Association](#) is committed to ensuring that everyone has access to safe, affordable, and appropriate care when and where they need it, enabling the system to do more good for more people. The ATA represents a broad and inclusive member network of leading healthcare delivery systems, academic institutions, technology solution providers and payers, as well as partner organizations and alliances, working to advance industry adoption of telehealth, promote responsible policy, advocate for government and market normalization, and provide education and resources to help integrate virtual care into emerging value-based delivery models. @americantelemed #telehealthishealth #ATApolicy

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