



September 3, 2021

The Honorable Click Bishop
Chair, Alaska Senate Labor & Commerce Committee
Alaska State Senate
120 4th St., #516
Juneau, AK 99801

The Honorable Gary Stevens
Vice Chair, Alaska Senate Labor & Commerce Committee
Alaska State Senate
120 4th St., #103
Juneau, AK 99801

RE: ATA SUPPORT FOR SENATE BILL 3006

Dear Chair Bishop and Vice Chair Stevens,

On behalf of the American Telemedicine Association (ATA) and the over 400 organizations we represent, I am writing to express our support for Senate Bill 3006.

The ATA is the only national organization whose mission revolves solely around the advancement of telemedicine and telehealth in the United States. Our utmost priority is ensuring that Americans can access affordable, high-quality health care at any place and any time. The expansion of telemedicine infrastructure around the country eases strain on the overburdened health care system, enabling it to provide care for millions more patients every year in an efficient and effective manner. The ATA represents a diverse and expansive coalition of technology solution providers and payers, as well as partner organizations and alliances, working together to promote the implementation of telemedicine across the country, endorse responsible telemedicine policy, encourage government and market normalization, and deliver education and resources designed to further the integration of virtual care through the use of various innovative technologies.

Senate Bill 3006 would serve as a rational and timely supplement of Alaska's state telemedicine statute. Among other provisions, the proposed legislation would permit a licensure waiver for out-of-state physicians and nurses who use the appropriate telemedicine technologies to diagnose and treat patients located in Alaska until July 1, 2022.

Throughout the pandemic, providers across the country have relied increasingly on synchronous (real-time) and asynchronous (store-and-forward) telemedicine technologies to perform patient evaluations and diagnoses in a variety of medical fields. In addition, medical professionals are utilizing remote patient monitoring technologies to move care out of the hospital, clinic, or doctor's office and into the home, where providers can monitor, collect, and analyze a patient's physiologic data to create care management plans for patients, especially those with chronic conditions.



Senate Bill 3006 creates a path for out-of-state health care providers who are licensed and maintain good standing in their own states to connect with Alaska patients whenever and wherever the patients' need for care arises. As the COVID-19 pandemic resurges across the country in the form of the Delta variant, our health care system is seeing a sizeable uptick in the number of patients using telehealth providers to receive their care, electing to stay out of areas of high transmissibility such as doctor's offices and hospitals. By enacting this licensure waiver, the legislature will ensure that patients can continue to get affordable, quality care without entering potentially dangerous brick-and-mortar locations. Moreover, those patients that are unserved or underserved will have an additional means to access to health care.

Laws permitting flexibility in licensure for out-of-state providers help to remove arbitrary geographical barriers, barriers with which Alaskans are more than familiar, that would limit patients' access to the health care services they want, need, and deserve. The ATA believes that patients should be able to receive virtual care from their preferred provider, regardless of that provider's physical location, so long as the practitioners are utilizing the appropriate technology to uphold the established standard of care and can still be held accountable by the respective regulatory boards and state agencies for the care rendered.

Thank you for your support for telehealth. We urge you and your colleagues to pass Senate Bill 3006 in the interest of ensuring that Alaska residents have safe and efficient access to high-quality, affordable health care. This is a critical time for policymakers to do everything that they can to increase the number of qualified licensed practitioners available for Alaskan citizens through remote technology that telehealth provides across the country. Senate Bill 3006 would do just that.

Please do not hesitate to let us know how we can be helpful to your efforts to develop practical telehealth and telemedicine policy in Alaska. If you have any questions or would like to discuss further the telemedicine industry's perspective, please contact me at kzebley@americantelemed.org.

Kind regards,

Kyle Zebley
Vice President of Public Policy
American Telemedicine Association