



HealthTIE

Testbed for Innovative Enterprises

Health TIE
3903 Seaforth Place
Anchorage AK 99508

State of Alaska Senate Labor and Commerce Committee
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182

April 20, 2022

RE: SB 175 Health Care Services by Telehealth

Dear State of Alaska Labor and Commerce Committee:

Officially launched in January 2020, Health TIE is an Alaska-based healthcare innovation hub with the mission of finding innovative ways to address “wicked problems” in Alaska’s healthcare system. As you know, based on economies of scale, carryover of inefficient, entrenched delivery practices, and geography, Alaska has some of the highest healthcare costs in the United States. Allowing the expanded use of telehealth services will provide a way to continue to deliver quality healthcare services at substantially lower costs and at higher levels of access and convenience for both patients and providers.

At every societal level, the Covid-19 pandemic has been terrible and disruptive over these last two years. However, it should be noted that telehealth services were able to meet the needs of thousands of Alaskans just when direct access to their care providers was severely limited. Because many of the barriers to using telehealth were waived, both patients and providers were able to continue important services; in fact, many providers noted that their rate of no-shows improved dramatically.

Alaskans, like many others in March 2020 had to think proactively and creatively when adjusting to the unknown uncertainties of the Covid-19 pandemic. Telehealth services, used when they were critically needed, were given the opportunity to show their value. It would be an absolute shame if the positive outcomes telehealth provides get lost as people and organizations return to business-as-usual healthcare practices. In the famous words of Winston Churchill, “Never let a good crisis go to waste.” It would be a waste if pre-March 2020 barriers to using telehealth returned. Please make sure every effort is made so healthcare providers and patients can continue to use telehealth services in Alaska.

Sincerely,

Jacqueline Summers

Jacqueline Summers, Managing Director
Health TIE