

Mr. Chairman:

The Telehealth Working Group is thankful for the opportunity to provide brief comments during this “Legislative Hearing on 21st Century Cures” and for the continued support of the Energy and Commerce Committee throughout this process.

Since its inception, the Telehealth Working Group has been deeply committed to bringing about patient-centered change that lowers costs, improves outcomes, and expands access to telehealth in the Medicare population. Innovative strategies like telehealth are paving a new way forward and focusing on what matters most: connecting patients with quality care. New technology is broadening patients’ access to care regardless of distance and is ultimately reshaping how healthcare is delivered.

The Telehealth Working Group is appreciative of the Committee’s recognition that increasing the availability of telehealth services and removing barriers to accessing care is an immediate need. There exists ample information in the telehealth landscape which supports the concept that telehealth offers not only increases access to critically needed care, but significant cost savings, particularly when substituted for in-person care. The progress made thus far by the Telehealth Working Group seeks to ensure that Medicare enrollees have access to this care as patients in the commercial, Medicaid, and many in the Medicare Advantage environment do. Our efforts are focused on creating a safe and cost-effective path to achieve this.

The critical concept that drives the Working Group is that telehealth should be treated as a modality to deliver health care services, with the same or higher expectations of quality and standard of care that a patient would receive in person.

We applaud the numerous telehealth stakeholders for their involvement throughout this process and for their substantive contributions in helping to craft legislation. We look forward to continuing our bipartisan discussions with the goal of putting forth good policy that achieves all of our stated goals.

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The Energy and Commerce bipartisan Telehealth Working Group, is made up of Chairman Fred Upton (R-MI), Ranking Member Frank Pallone (D-NJ), Subcommittee Chairman Joe Pitts (R-PA), Rep. Greg Walden (R-OR), Rep. Doris Matsui (D-CA), Rep. Peter Welch (D-VT), Rep. Bob Latta (R-OH), Rep. Gregg Harper (R-MS), Rep. Bill Johnson (R-OH), and Rep. MarkWayne Mullins (R-OK)