

March 2, 2021

The Honorable Anna Eshoo
Chairwoman, Subcommittee on Health
House Committee on Energy and Commerce
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Brett Guthrie
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Health
House Committee on Energy and Commerce
2322 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairwoman Eshoo and Ranking Member Guthrie:

We write to you today to thank you for holding a hearing entitled, “The Future of Telehealth: How COVID-19 is Changing the Delivery of Virtual Care.” Your attention to this critical issue is appreciated by HealthEquity and by the millions of Americans who utilize telehealth services.

HealthEquity administers health savings accounts (“HSAs”) and other consumer-directed benefits for more than 12 million accounts on behalf of American workers. We partner with employers, benefits advisors, and health and retirement plan providers who share our mission to connect health and wealth and value our culture of remarkable “Purple” service.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Congress included temporary provisions in the CARES Act (P.L. 116-136) permitting an HSA-eligible high deductible health plan to cover telehealth and other remote services without a deductible or before the deductible has been met. These temporary provisions providing access to vital care expire at the end of 2021.

While these provisions are temporary, the growth in telehealth is likely not. Surveys have shown explosive growth in telehealth since the pandemic began:

- A study in *Health Affairs* found that 30.1% of all healthcare visits – a 23-fold increase – were conducted via telemedicine between January and June 2020¹;
- A coalition of self-insured plan sponsors reported a 28-fold increase in telemedicine visits between January and May 2020²; and

¹ Population of 16.7 million participants with commercial insurance or a Medicare Advantage plan.
<https://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/abs/10.1377/hlthaff.2020.01786?journalCode=hlthaff>

² <https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/patient-officehospital-visits-down-telemedicine-visits-up-for-non-covid-19-health-issues-based-on-claims-analysis-by-health-transformation-alliance-301236052.html>

The Honorable Anna Eshoo
The Honorable Brett Guthrie
March 2, 2021
Page 2

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- A major telemedicine company reported a 156% increase in appointments for 2020 compared to 2019³.

These statistics show how critically important telemedicine has become. Few observers believe the practice of medicine will return to the way it was before COVID. As society and technology evolve, so should health and tax policy.

We respectfully request that you make the CARES Act telehealth provisions permanent and support the millions of Americans who have found telemedicine to be a safe and effective means of receiving medical care.

Thank you for your attention to this issue. We are happy to be of assistance in any way.

Sincerely,



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Cc: The Honorable Frank Pallone, Jr.
The Honorable Cathy McMorris Rodgers

³ <https://ir.teladochealth.com/news-and-events/investor-news/press-release-details/2021/Teladoc-Health-Reports-Fourth-Quarter-and-Full-Year-2020-Results/default.aspx>