



ERIC The ERISA Industry Committee

The Only National Association Advocating Solely for the Employee Benefit and Compensation Interests of America's Largest Employers

1400 L Street, NW, Suite 350, Washington, DC 20005 • (202) 789-1400 • www.eric.org

Annette Guarisco Fildes, President & CEO

WRITTEN TESTIMONY ON BEHALF OF THE ERISA INDUSTRY COMMITTEE (ERIC) REGARDING HOUSE BILL 1209 – “RELATIVE TO CONSULTATIONS UNDER THE TELEMEDICINE LAW”

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, HUMAN SERVICES AND ELDERLY AFFAIRS

February 11, 2016

The ERISA Industry Committee (ERIC) is pleased to support New Hampshire House Bill 1209 (HB 1209) regarding the establishment of provider-patient relationships through the use of telemedicine. HB 1209 strikes the right balance of increased flexibility needed to maximize the benefits of telehealth, while maintaining the needed protections to ensure a high standard of health care in New Hampshire.

ERIC speaks in one voice for our members – the country’s largest employers – on their benefit and compensation interests, including many members with employees and retirees in New Hampshire.

As plan sponsors, our members strive to provide the best health care possible to their employees, retirees, and families at affordable costs. At ERIC, we seek to enhance our members’ ability to provide high-quality, affordable health care. We recognize the significant opportunity provided by telehealth to modernize health care delivery and improve access to quality medical care for workers, retirees, and their families.

ERIC members want their employees to have the care they need – when and how they need it. Telehealth provides many unique benefits that are appreciated by employees, retirees, and their families because it:

- Increases accessibility to medical care, with the needed flexibility to receive the care 24-hours a day, seven days a week;
- Provides access to care for rural and urban underserved populations, retirees, the elderly, disabled employees, and those with language barriers, chronic conditions, or transportation barriers that may otherwise not have access to care;
- Minimizes the time spent attending to health care needs, while ensuring access to health care professionals at times and locations that are convenient; and
- Allows access to health care that is provided at an affordable, cost-effective rate.

The changes that HB 1209 seeks to make to existing telemedicine definitions, specifically striking the face-to-face requirement in the establishment of practitioner-patient, physician-patient, and advanced practiced registered nurse-patient relationships, increases access to needed care without compromising high-quality standards. In other words, HB 1209 rightfully considers the needs of patients to have better access to care that can be provided via telemedicine and will permit more widespread access to this modern health care delivery tool and the associated benefits.

ERIC also applauds the more technology-neutral requirement put forth in HB 1209 that will permit use of different types of technology platforms that are designed for telemedicine. With innovative technologies emerging every day, limiting the types of technology that may be used to provide telemedicine creates an unnecessary barrier to telemedicine services. There are many technology platforms that may be used to provide telehealth services, and patients and providers should be allowed to use different types of technology to give and receive needed care.

ERIC urges the Committee consider the needs of patients in New Hampshire that stand to benefit from increased access to telemedicine services, to support HB 1209, and to advance this bill out of committee favorably.