

April 1, 2020

The Honorable Larry Hogan
Governor of Maryland
State House
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Governor Hogan:

Thank you for your leadership during the COVID-19 public health crisis. The large employers that we represent are working to protect their employees and families during this crisis, and need your support to ensure that Maryland families can access telehealth. Patients could greatly benefit if you sign pending legislation to eliminate burdensome telehealth rules, such as requiring the first visit to be via audio *and* video. ERIC is working state-by-state to streamline and improve telehealth, representing large employers in every industry sector that are standing by their employees during the COVID-19 crisis.

We urge you to sign Senate Bill 402/ House Bill 448. Senate Bill 402 passed both chambers on March 17, and House Bill 448 passed both chambers on March 16. Without relief, many health professionals cannot fully utilize telehealth technology for their patients, because of outdated restrictions under their licensure boards. Under the July 22, 2019 rule passed by the Maryland Board of Physicians, telehealth interactions are mandated to use video and audio for the initial visit – thus making telehealth use essentially impossible for patients who lack sufficient broadband access or the means to own needed technology. This legislation would remove that requirement and allow for video and/or audio to be used. ERIC believes restrictive technology requirements only serve to prevent new forms of telehealth technology, which are desperately needed right now, from being quickly implemented. Patients should not be prevented from using telehealth solely because they lack the capability to communicate with a provider via video.

We are urgently asking you to lift these restrictions by signing Senate Bill 402/House Bill 448.

We are also including a link to our testimony submitted to the Chairperson of the [Senate Committee on Education, Health, and Welfare](#) and the [House Committee on Health and Government Operations](#) on February 11, 2020. If you have any questions, please contact ERIC's Carly Sternberg at cssternberg@eric.org or 202.627.1914 or me. Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,

James P. Gelfand

