



THE ERISA  
INDUSTRY COMMITTEE  
*Shaping benefit policies  
before they shape you.*

ANNETTE GUARISCO FILDES  
President & CEO

April 20, 2020

The Honorable Asa Hutchinson  
Governor of Arkansas  
State House  
Little Rock, AR 72201

Dear Governor Hutchinson,

The ERISA Industry Committee (ERIC) and our nationwide employer member companies commend you for taking swift and strategic actions to address the COVID-19 crisis. We are writing to urge your administration to take a critically important step to make health care immediately available and accessible across your state. Specifically, we ask that you temporarily waive telehealth medical licensure requirements for all out-of-state providers, eliminating any cumbersome barriers to care during this pandemic crisis when families need access to telehealth more than ever before.

ERIC is a national advocacy organization that exclusively represents large employers that provide health, retirement, paid leave, and other benefits to their nationwide workforces. Our member companies are leaders in every sector of the economy, with stores, warehouses, factories, and operations in every state. Our member companies, like most large employers, offer telehealth benefits to workers and their families, but telehealth in your state is not fully available to them because your state does not participate in interstate licensure reciprocity.

During a time when residents are homebound, and many provider offices are closed, the need for 24-hour access to first-rate telehealth is at an all-time high. Telemedicine allows people to connect with a health care provider via electronic and telecommunications technologies, such as a phone, video conferencing platform, or computer. Patients can get medical advice for conditions such as pink eye, strep throat, suspicious-looking skin spots, and yes, for COVID-19, all without leaving the safety of their own homes. Telehealth also allows patients to consult with mental health providers which is especially important during this pandemic.

Access to telehealth benefits is not enough – patients need a doctor to be ready and willing on the other end. And right now, your state’s licensure requirements stand in the way for many patients to access the care they need.

For high-quality telehealth services to be widely available and accessible during this time, telehealth must develop without regulatory barriers that limit availability. Allowing providers to practice in any state compensates for provider shortages in COVID-19 hotspots and in rural regions that lack access to care.

Thank you for considering our request. We know waiving this requirement can help patients in your state get the care they need when they need it. ERIC is standing by to help. If you have any questions or we can be a resource for you, please contact Carly Sternberg at [csternberg@eric.org](mailto:csternberg@eric.org) or 202.627.1914, or me at [aguariscofildes@eric.org](mailto:aguariscofildes@eric.org) or 202.627.1910. Thank you again for your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,