

November 30, 2020

The Honorable Todd Lakey
The Honorable Gayann DeMordaunt
Co-Chairs
Occupational Licensing and Certification Laws Committee
Idaho Legislature
700 W Jefferson Street
Boise ID 83720

Dear Co-Chairs Lakey and DeMordaunt:

The ERISA Industry Committee (ERIC) and our nationwide employer member companies applaud your efforts to increase access to health care for patients in Idaho by allowing them to see licensed providers from other states when using telehealth. ERIC supports interstate practice among providers as it will eliminate barriers to care for patients, and promote provider choice, as the country becomes more interconnected through technology. ERIC commends Idaho's first steps to increase telehealth services through interstate telehealth and urges prompt passage of telehealth interstate practice legislation so all may benefit from telehealth services.

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. ERIC member companies, like most large employers, offer health benefits to workers and their families. However, patients' access to care is often hampered by provider shortages due to geography and market conditions.

Increasing the interstate practice of telehealth providers will allow ERIC member companies to expand their health benefit offerings in the state, ensuring that patients will be able to see the providers they need in a timely manner. Allowing interstate telehealth also reduces red tape for qualified providers by reducing barriers related to licensing. Permitting providers to practice in multiple states can help reduce provider shortages, improve market competition, and boost the quality and affordability of health care for patients throughout the state. During the COVID-19 pandemic provider shortages are even more acute, especially for mental health services. Measures you are considering will help address this shortage.

Thank you for considering our comments in support of the telehealth draft legislation. We know removing interstate telehealth barriers 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 if we can be a resource in any way as the bill continues through the legislative process. Please contact me at jgelfand@ERIC.org or 202-789-1400.

Thank you again for your support for improving telehealth access for patients in Idaho.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "James P. Gelfand". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

James P. Gelfand
Senior Vice President
Health Policy