

March 22, 2021

Via Email

The Honorable Matthew J. Shepherd
Speaker
Arkansas House of Representatives
1 Capitol Mall, Fifth Floor
Little Rock, AR 72201

Re: Large Employers in Support of HB 1063 and Telehealth Expansion in Arkansas

Dear Speaker Shepherd:

The ERISA Industry Committee (ERIC) and our nationwide employer member companies applaud Arkansas's efforts to increase access to health care for patients in Arkansas by allowing a telehealth provider to use audio-only telehealth to treat patients in the state, as is called for in House Bill 1063. We strongly support HB 1063 and urge the House to pass this legislation in order to maximize the use of telemedicine in Arkansas. ERIC is the only national association that advocates exclusively for large employers on health, retirement, and compensation public policies at the federal, state, and local levels. We speak in one voice for our member companies on their benefit and compensation interests, including many with employees and retirees in Arkansas.

As plan sponsors, our member companies strive to provide the best health care coverage possible to their employees, retirees, and families at an affordable cost. ERIC recognizes the significant opportunity telemedicine has to modernize health care delivery and improve access to quality medical care for workers and their dependents. Telemedicine minimizes the time spent attending a health care provider visit, making telehealth a great value to working parents, caregivers, and others struggling to balance work and family demands. It also provides access to care for rural and urban underserved populations, retirees, the elderly, disabled employees, those with language barriers, chronic conditions, or transportation barriers who may otherwise not have access to care.

Large employers have been the biggest innovators in health care, and most of them have adopted telemedicine to provide added value for their employees and to help drive down health care costs.

It is important that we increase access to care for Arkansans by fully taking advantage of technological innovations. For this reason, **ERIC encourages you to support HB 1063 and to urge passage of the bill by the House Committee on Public Health, Welfare and Labor.** ERIC is pleased to represent large employers with the goal of ensuring telemedicine benefits are accessible for millions of workers, retirees, and their families. If you have any questions concerning our written testimony, or if we can be of further assistance, please contact me at sbelmont@eric.org or 202-627-1914.

Shannon M. Belmont
Associate, Health Policy

Cc: Committee on Public Health, Welfare and Labor of the Arkansas House of Representatives