



**TESTIMONY OF
CONNECTICUT HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION
SUBMITTED TO THE
PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE
Monday, March 21, 2022**

SB 375, An Act Concerning Telehealth

The Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA) appreciates this opportunity to submit testimony concerning **SB 375, An Act Concerning Telehealth**. CHA supports this bill, which extends the telehealth coverage and related flexibilities established in Public Act 21-9 for an additional year.

Since early 2020, hospitals and health systems have been at the center of Connecticut's response to the COVID-19 public health emergency, acting as a vital partner with the state and our communities. Hospitals expanded critical care capacity, procured essential equipment and supplies, and stood up countless community COVID-19 testing locations. Hospitals have been an essential component of the statewide vaccine distribution plan including efforts to reach and serve historically under-resourced communities disproportionately affected by the virus.

Telehealth uses technology to connect patients to a wide variety of vital healthcare services and enables access to primary care physicians, specialists, and a variety of other providers. It facilitates patient and clinician contact in support of diagnosis and treatment, behavioral health and rehabilitative therapy, as well as routine monitoring, advice, reminders, and education. Telehealth helps ensure that options are available for patients to receive the right care, at the right place, at the right time.

Patient care has benefitted greatly as a result of the passage of Public Act 21-9, which preserved the expansion in telehealth coverage and flexibilities introduced in response to the pandemic. Although the pandemic was the catalyst for these changes, Public Act 21-9 demonstrated the state's recognition that telehealth is an essential method for delivering healthcare services.

Bill SB 375 would extend the telehealth coverage and related flexibilities established in Public Act 21-9 for an additional year, from June 30, 2023 to June 30, 2024.

CHA supports the proposed extension, but would encourage the Committee to consider amending the bill to make the provisions permanent. Although aspects of telehealth coverage will continue to evolve, the basic coverage and flexibilities established in Public Act 21-9 are an essential foundation that should be preserved as minimum standard coverage.

Thank you for your consideration of our position. For additional information, contact CHA Government Relations at (203) 294-7310.