

March 4, 2022

The Honorable Mariannette J. Miller-Meeks
U.S. House of Representatives
1716 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mike Kelly
U.S. House of Representatives
1707 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable H. Morgan Griffith
U.S. House of Representatives
2202 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representatives Miller-Meeks, Griffith, and Kelly,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on your request for information (RFI) regarding the utilization of wearable technologies, the expansion of telemedicine, and the digital modernization efforts in the U.S. healthcare system.

CHIME is an executive organization dedicated to serving chief information officers (CIOs), chief medical information officers (CMIOs), chief nursing information officers (CNIOs) and other senior healthcare IT leaders. With over 5,000 members, CHIME provides a highly interactive, trusted environment enabling senior professional and industry leaders to collaborate; exchange best practices; address professional development needs; and advocate for the effective use of information management to improve the health and healthcare in the communities they serve.

Over the past two years, the COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated just how crucial telehealth can be in creating and sustaining a cost efficient, accessible, and safe healthcare system. Patients across the nation were thrust into the unknown in March 2020, with a sudden inability to safely access the care they need. Providers nationwide stood up to the task and rapidly implemented complete telehealth solutions, allowing providers and patients to connect safely. Since then, the healthcare system has continued to utilize telehealth at consistent levels not seen pre-pandemic.

It is crucial that the gains we have made with this critical technology are not reversed and that patients do not lose access to care and fall off the “telehealth cliff.” To that end, we ask that Congress prioritize making the following flexibilities created under the COVID-19 PHE permanent:

- Removal of geographic and originating-site restrictions so that patients can access care at home and at other locations
- Reimbursement parity for Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) and Rural Health Centers (RHCs)
- Waiver of cross state medical licensure requirements
- Disaster waiver authority enabling HHS to expand telehealth during future pandemics and natural disasters

In addition, CHIME supports removal of the in-person requirement for telemental health services in Medicare. In-person requirements on telehealth services create unnecessary barriers to care and can be especially harmful for those seeking mental and behavioral health services.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue and we look forward to continuing to work with you. Should the Healthy Future Task Force have any questions about our positions or if more information is needed, please contact Cassie Leonard, Director of Congressional Affairs, at cleonard@chimecentral.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Russell P. Branzell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Russell" and last name "Branzell" clearly legible.

Russell P. Branzell, CHCIO, LCHIME
President and CEO CHIME