



February 26, 2020

The Hon. Mitch McConnell, Majority Leader
The Hon. Chuck Schumer, Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Hon. Nancy Pelosi, Speaker
The Hon. Kevin McCarthy, Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Richard Shelby, Chairman
The Honorable Patrick Leahy, Vice Chairman
Senate Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nita Lowey, Chairwoman
The Honorable Kay Granger, Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressional leaders:

We are writing to urge you to include a provision in the COVID-19 supplemental appropriation that will allow telehealth visits to be covered in traditional Medicare during the public health emergency.

Telehealth can help patients experiencing coronavirus symptoms access medical professionals quickly, and reduce the risk of exposing others. While physicians cannot confirm a diagnosis of coronavirus through a telehealth interface, they can screen patients, assign a risk category, answer questions and recommend the next steps.

Current Medicare restrictions will hinder the use of telehealth among seniors in traditional Medicare. Section 9 of the bipartisan, bicameral Creating Opportunities Now for Necessary and Effective Care Technologies (CONNECT) for Health Act of 2019 (S. 2741 & HR 4932) would empower the Secretary of Health and Human Services to waive restrictions on the use of telehealth for Medicare beneficiaries during national emergencies.

Including this provision in the upcoming supplemental legislation will encourage health systems and others to leverage telehealth in their communities, allowing for critical care connections. This expanded capacity will help preserve access to in-person care for those in critical need and allow the majority of initial screenings to happen outside of the hospital.

Thank you for your consideration, we look forward to working with you on this important effort. Please contact Chris Adamec at 202-640-5941 or cadamec@connectwithcare.org with any questions.

Sincerely,

Krista Drobac
Executive Director