

# MEDICAL SOCIETY of the STATE OF NEW YORK

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*Division of Governmental Affairs*  
**MEMORANDUM IN SUPPORT**

**ON SENATE HEALTH COMMITTEE  
AGENDA**

**S.6733 (Rivera)**

**IN ASSEMBLY WAYS & MEANS COMMITTEE**

**A.7316 (PAULIN)**

This legislation would amend the public health and insurance laws to, among other provisions, continue parity in payment to physicians and other care providers by commercial and Medicaid health plans for patient care services provided via telehealth. The current law, which passed as part of the final state budget for FY2022-23, is set to expire on April 1, 2024. In addition, this legislation extends the parity provisions to federally qualified health centers (FQHCs). As this legislation would extend this important law which helps to ensure the continued use of telehealth as a modality for delivering essential care, the **Medical Society of the State of New York (MSSNY) supports this legislation.** At the same time, **MSSNY also strongly supports permanently continuing the telehealth payment parity requirements as part of this year's final State budget.**

The COVID-19 public health emergency triggered a significant, and necessary shift in how patients receive health care, with telemedicine becoming an essential lifeline for patients to consult with their physicians. It did not, however, replace the need for face-to-face visits with physician practices developing hybrid models based on individual patient need. Behavioral health conditions were the most utilized services and during the pandemic New York saw an approximately 130-fold increase in telehealth usage, but a range of other health conditions found Telehealth to be an important part of managing their disease.

According to FAIR Health's monthly regional tracker for the northeast for September 2023, treatment of mental health conditions continued to be the most significant basis for telehealth use followed by treatment for COVID-19. However, there are also significant uses for diagnosis and treatment of acute respiratory diseases and infections, substance use disorders and developmental disorders. Moreover, evidence shows that telehealth substantially reduces the rate of missed appointments, provides for greater adherence to treatment plans, lowers travel time and costs. The State's efforts to ensure fair payment for this emerging new modality for delivering care has played a significant role in ensuring patients have access to needed care.

**For all of the reasons stated above, the Medical Society of the State of New York supports this legislation.**

2/23/24  
ZDC - Support

**Respectfully Submitted,**