

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20510**

December 4, 2024

The Honorable Charles Schumer  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mike Johnson  
Speaker  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries  
Minority Leader  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Majority Leader Schumer, Minority Leader McConnell, Speaker Johnson, and Minority Leader Jeffries:

Expanded Medicare coverage for telehealth services is set to expire on December 31, 2024. As you work to advance a year-end appropriations package, we urge you to extend coverage as much as possible so that all Medicare beneficiaries retain access to these services.

Telehealth plays a critical role in health care delivery – a fact that Congress has recognized by expanding coverage during and after the COVID-19 public health emergency. Most recently, in the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023, Congress enacted a two-year extension of Medicare telehealth services coverage. Committees of jurisdiction in the House of Representatives have recently recognized the need to protect patients’ access to telehealth services by voting to advance an additional two-year extension on a bipartisan, unanimous basis.

We ask you to prioritize provisions that remove geographic restrictions on telehealth services and permit the home and other clinically appropriate settings as originating sites. Congress should also expand the authority for practitioners eligible to furnish telehealth services. Rural and underserved communities rely on telehealth services<sup>1</sup>, and Congress should recognize federally qualified health centers and rural health clinics as telehealth distant site providers. Additionally, Congress should allow the use of telehealth in the recertification of hospice care. Finally, telehealth has transformed mental and behavioral health care, now accounting for 40 percent of telehealth services provided under the Medicare Physician Fee Schedule.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, Congress should permanently repeal the six-month in-person visit requirement for telemental health services. It should also reject similar policies that create barriers to care.

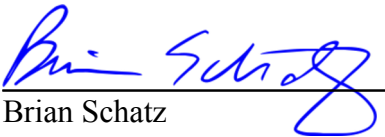
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<sup>1</sup> Brian O’Donnell, Ledia Tabor, “Telehealth in Medicare: Status Report” (presentation, Advising the Congress on Medicare Issues, April 11, 2024.”

<sup>2</sup> Ibid


Telehealth provides essential access to care and improves outcomes, including reduced emergency department utilization and improved medication adherence.<sup>3</sup> Medicare beneficiaries have come to rely on expanded access to telehealth services and are satisfied with the care they receive.<sup>4</sup> While there is overwhelming support for Congress to enact permanent telehealth legislation, we must provide patients and clinicians with long-term certainty to support continued investment in technology and clinical models to meet the evolving health care needs of Medicare beneficiaries. We appreciate your collaboration and leadership on this issue and look forward to working with you to ensure access to telehealth services is retained by the end of 2024.

Sincerely,



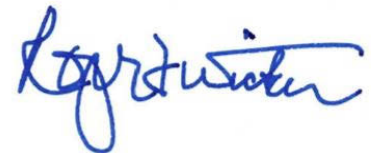
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Brian Schatz  
United States Senator




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Mike Thompson  
Member of Congress



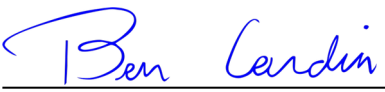
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Roger F. Wicker  
United States Senator



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David Schweikert  
Member of Congress




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Benjamin L. Cardin  
United States Senator




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Doris Matsui  
Member of Congress



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Cindy Hyde-Smith  
United States Senator



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Troy Balderson  
Member of Congress

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<sup>3</sup> Carter H. Nakamoto, David M. Cutler, Nancy D. Beaulieu, Lori Uscher-Pines, and Ateev Mehrotra. “The Impact Of Telemedicine On Medicare Utilization, Spending, And Quality, 2019–22.” *Health Affairs* 43, no. 5 (April 2024): 691-700, <https://doi.org/10.1377/hlthaff.2023.01142>.

<sup>4</sup> Brian O’Donnell, Ledia Tabor, “Telehealth in Medicare: Status Report” (presentation, Advising the Congress on Medicare Issues, April 11, 2024.”



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Mark R. Warner  
United States Senator



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John Boozman  
United States Senator



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Cory A. Booker  
United States Senator



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Bill Cassidy, M.D.  
United States Senator



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Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senator



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Shelley Moore Capito  
United States Senator



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Joe Manchin III  
United States Senator



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James E. Risch  
United States Senator



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Kirsten Gillibrand  
United States Senator



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Thom Tillis  
United States Senator



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Jeanne Shaheen  
United States Senator



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Markwayne Mullin  
United States Senator



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Tina Smith  
United States Senator




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Kevin Cramer  
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Peter Welch  
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Sheldon Whitehouse  
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Tammy Duckworth  
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Susan M. Collins  
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Steve Daines  
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Deb Fischer  
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Mike Rounds  
United States Senator



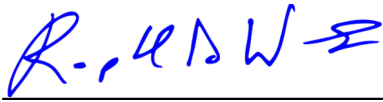
Lindsey O. Graham  
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Lisa Murkowski  
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Dan Sullivan  
United States Senator



Raphael Warnock  
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Maria Cantwell  
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Chris Van Hollen  
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Catherine Cortez Masto  
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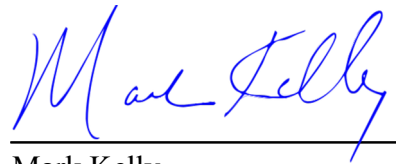
Angus S. King, Jr.  
United States Senator



John Hoeven  
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar  
United States Senator



Mark Kelly  
United States Senator



Jacky Rosen  
United States Senator



Jack Reed  
United States Senator



Martin Heinrich  
United States Senator



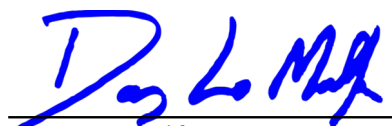
Alex Padilla  
United States Senator



Adrian Smith  
Member of Congress



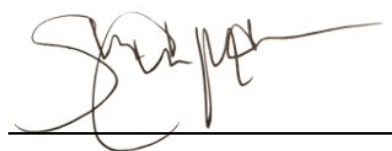
Ted W. Lieu  
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Doug LaMalfa  
Member of Congress



Nydia M. Velázquez  
Member of Congress



Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick  
Member of Congress



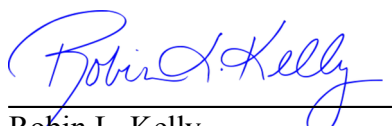
Shri Thanedar  
Member of Congress



Kathy Castor  
Member of Congress



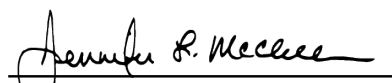
Stephen F. Lynch  
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Robin L. Kelly  
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Mike Levin  
Member of Congress



Jennifer L. McClellan  
Member of Congress



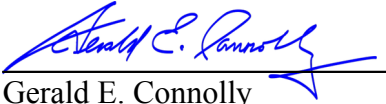
Lori Trahan  
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Danny K. Davis  
Member of Congress



Debbie Dingell  
Member of Congress



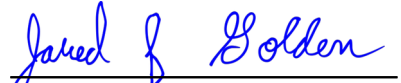
Gerald E. Connolly  
Member of Congress



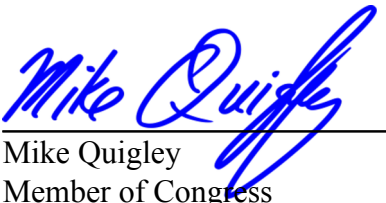
Dan Goldman  
Member of Congress



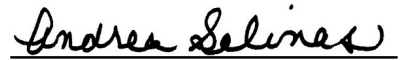
Grace F. Napolitano  
Member of Congress



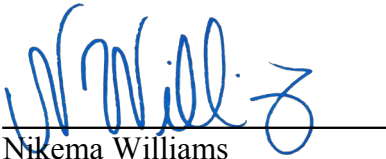
Jared Golden  
Member of Congress



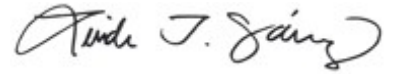
Mike Quigley  
Member of Congress



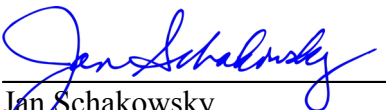
Andrea Salinas  
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Nikema Williams  
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Linda T. Sánchez  
Member of Congress



Jan Schakowsky  
Member of Congress



Donald G. Davis  
Member of Congress



Marilyn Strickland  
Member of Congress



Delia C. Ramirez  
Member of Congress



Kevin Mullin  
Member of Congress



David J. Trone  
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Frank J. Mrvan  
Member of Congress



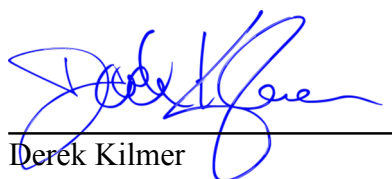
Greg Stanton  
Member of Congress



Scott H. Peters  
Member of Congress



Julia Brownley  
Member of Congress



Derek Kilmer  
Member of Congress



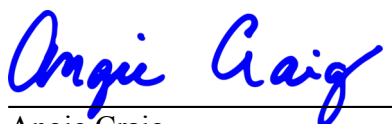
Zoe Lofgren  
Member of Congress



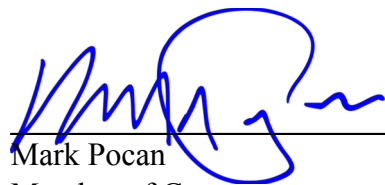
Chris Deluzio  
Member of Congress



Diana DeGette  
Member of Congress



Angie Craig  
Member of Congress



Mark Pocan  
Member of Congress



Maxwell Alejandro Frost  
Member of Congress



Seth Magaziner  
Member of Congress



Nanette Diaz Barragán  
Member of Congress



Marc A. Veasey  
Member of Congress





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Teresa Leger Fernández  
Member of Congress



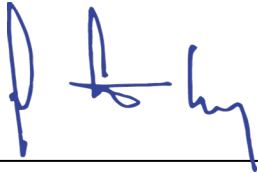
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Mike Ezell  
Member of Congress



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Troy E. Nehls  
Member of Congress




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Trent Kelly  
Member of Congress



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Michael Guest  
Member of Congress



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Dwight Evans  
Member of Congress



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Eleanor Holmes Norton  
Member of Congress



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Paul Tonko  
Member of Congress