

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SB 5436

As Reported by House Committee On: Health Care & Wellness

Title: An act relating to expanding patient access to health services through telemedicine by further defining where a patient may receive the service.

Brief Description: Expanding patient access to health services through telemedicine by further defining where a patient may receive the service.

Sponsors: Senators Becker, Cleveland, Frockt and Keiser.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Health Care & Wellness: 3/10/17, 3/15/17 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Allows any location determined by a patient to be an originating site for purposes of reimbursement for telemedicine services.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE & WELLNESS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 17 members: Representatives Cody, Chair; Macri, Vice Chair; Schmick, Ranking Minority Member; Graves, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Caldier, Clibborn, DeBolt, Harris, Jinkins, MacEwen, Maycumber, Riccelli, Robinson, Rodne, Slatter, Stonier and Tharinger.

Staff: Jim Morishima (786-7191).

Background:

Telemedicine is the use of interactive audio, video, or electronic media for the purpose of diagnosis, consultation, or treatment of a patient at an originating site. Store and forward technology is the use of an asynchronous transmission of a patient's medical information from an originating site to a provider at a distant site.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

A health plan offered by a health carrier, a health plan offered to state employees and their dependents, and a Medicaid managed care plan must reimburse providers for health care services provided through telemedicine or store and forward technology if:

- the services are covered services;
- the services are medically necessary;
- the services are essential health benefits under the federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act;
- the services are determined to be safely and effectively provided through telemedicine or store and forward technology according to generally accepted health care practices and standards; and
- the technology meets state and federal standards governing the privacy and security of protected health information.

An originating site for telemedicine includes a hospital, rural health clinic, federally qualified health center, health care provider's office, community mental health center, skilled nursing center, renal dialysis center, or a home. A facility fee may not be charged for telemedicine services offered to a patient in his or her home.

Summary of Bill:

The list of originating sites for purposes of telemedicine reimbursement is expanded to include any location determined by the individual receiving the service. A facility fee may not be charged for telemedicine services offered to a patient in such a location.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect on January 1, 2018.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This bill is a product of the Washington State Telemedicine Collaborative. Defining "home" for purposes of telemedicine is an access to care issue. Telemedicine, including the locations where telemedicine may be provided, should be expanded. This bill expands the definition of home broadly so people can receive services where they feel comfortable, including homes, churches, and community centers. A narrower definition would be too limited. This bill will be a boon to patient access and will help people in rural areas. This is where medicine is going.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Senator Becker, prime sponsor; Lisa Thatcher, Washington State Hospital Association; Dave Knutson, Association of Washington Healthcare Plans; Nova

Gattman, Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board and Health Workforce Council; and Katie Kolan, Washington State Medical Association.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.