

# Minnesota Chapter

INCORPORATED IN MINNESOTA

American Academy of Pediatrics

DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®



**Minnesota Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics**

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February 25, 2021

Dear Chair Stephenson and House Commerce Committee Members,

On behalf of the Minnesota Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, I am writing to support the Minnesota Telehealth Act (HF 1412) which will provide continued coverage for all patients throughout the state to continue to receive high quality telehealth, including care delivered by phone.

Most health care organizations around the state have had to rapidly pivot to provide virtual visits for their patients, both video and telephone visits. This has been made possible by insurance changes to pay for these services. Not only has this been essential during the pandemic when many persons and families have not been comfortable coming into a clinic to be seen, but with time, many families have realized the advantage of being "seen" by their clinicians while they are at home, without having to drive to their clinic. In the case of patients with complex health care needs, this has the added benefit of not having to travel to be seen, which in some cases can be a very complicated endeavor. While telehealth visits cannot replace all in-person visits, in some cases, it can provide a reasonable alternative.

We also realize that not everyone in the state has the broadband access needed to be able access such care, nor the financial means to afford computers, tablets, or smart phones. Coverage of telephone services is an essential piece of your legislation to improve the disparities that exist in certain communities. The MNAAP strongly supports legislation to make telehealth more accessible and to make sure both telehealth and telephone care continues to be reimbursed equal to in-person visits.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sheldon Berkowitz MD, FAAP".

Sheldon Berkowitz, MD, FAAP

President, Minnesota Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics