

SB 129 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Health Care

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Meeting Dates: 4/23

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Allows licensed optometrists to engage in the practice of telemedicine under specified conditions. Defines "eye examination," "optometric clinical health care services," "store and forward," "telehealth," and "telemedicine." Requires optometrist to establish patient-provider relationship with the patient that includes an in-person eye examination prior to engaging in the practice of telemedicine. Defines permissible practice of telemedicine by optometrists operating through online platform. Allows the Oregon Board of Optometry to adopt rules related to the practice of telemedicine. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

REVENUE: no revenue impact.

FISCAL: minimal expenditure impact.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

Telehealth is the use of technology to delivery health care, health information, or health education at a distance. There are three types of telehealth applications in use: (1) real-time communication through use of video or telephone, (2) store-and-forward involving transmission involving data, sound or video for evaluation, and (3) remote patient monitoring that allows patient's to collect health data and transfer the data to a remote provider for monitoring. In recent years, states have enacted legislation to promote telehealth as a tool to improve access to care and address workforce gaps. Policies range from defining telehealth to determining if services are to be covered and reimbursed through public and private payers, to interstate compacts and licensure of providers to reduce barriers to providing telehealth services and promote cross-state practice by health care professionals.

Oregon law defines telemedicine as the "delivered through a two-way electronic communication, including but not limited to video, audio, Voice over Internet Protocol or transmission of telemetry, that allows a health professional to interact with a patient, a parent or guardian of a patient or another health professional on a patient's behalf, who is at an originating site" (ORS 743A.185)

Senate Bill 129-A defines permissible telemedicine practices for optometrists licensed in Oregon.

1st Chamber vote (Senate): Ayes, 28.