

SB 629 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Health Care

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Meeting Dates: 3/22, 3/29

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Defines "telepharmacy." Authorizes pharmacist to use telepharmacy services to dispense prescription drugs to a patient. Allows State Board of Pharmacy to adopt rules on supervision of pharmacy technicians and types of allowable telepharmacy services. Takes effect on 91st day following adjournment sine die.

REVENUE: May have revenue impact, but no statement yet issued.

FISCAL: May have fiscal impact, but no statement yet issued.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

Telemedicine refers broadly to the use of technology to support long-distance health care and non-clinical services such as provider training and continuing medical education. The types of health care professionals licensed or authorized to provide telemedicine services vary within each state, as does the ability to practice telemedicine across states. Coverage of, and reimbursement for, types of telemedicine services differs among Medicare, Medicaid, and commercial health plans.

The term "telepharmacy" refers to pharmaceutical care in which a pharmacist and patient are not in the same physical location and can interact using information and communication technology (ICT). Common types of telepharmacy services include patient counseling by telephone or video conferencing, medication therapy management, and the remote supervision of technician dispensing of medications. Telepharmacy has been adopted in states to address pharmacist workforce shortages in underserved and rural areas.

According to a recent study (Le 2020), among the 24 states that have enacted legislation to allow telepharmacy, there is currently no standard as to how the practice is regulated. Individual states have different regulations, including geographic restrictions, reimbursement requirements among payer types, facility limitations, security standards for online data sharing and access, and staffing and educational requirements for telepharmacists.

Senate Bill 629 seeks to authorize the use of telepharmacy services in Oregon.