

Dear Chair Prusak and members of the committee,

In 1987, my husband and I, both clinical psychologists, launched a new service, Counseling by Phone, to serve underserved people in Alaska. This was before the time of ubiquitous internet, social media, behavioral health insurance parity, or free long distance and 800 numbers. We eventually had to close it down because of some of these barriers on our end, but saw the vast potential of providing telehealth service. Not only were we able to serve clients in areas without service, but also the ease of telehealth enabled people to reach out earlier and get better faster.

I have also had the privilege to work with Native Health Aides throughout Alaska who rely extensively on telehealth support and consultation to provide services in remote areas. Again, this model is powerful. Many times individuals can also access this service from their homes through the Native Health Corporations. This makes specialty care available to everyone who needs it, amplifies the skills of local practitioners, and allows people facing a wide variety of barriers to service from distance to disability to receive support.

I strongly support passage of HD2508

Carol Greenough, Ph.D
retired clinical psychologist.