



Oregon Pediatric Society

A Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics. Incorporated in Oregon

DATE: April 23, 2021

TO: Senator Deb Patterson, Chair
and members of the Senate Committee on Health Care

FROM: Julie Scholz, Executive Director
Oregon Pediatric Society

SUBJECT: Support for HB 2508, Telemedicine Parity

The Oregon Pediatric Society (OPS) is the state chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics. Our membership is committed to improving and protecting the health and well-being of all children in Oregon, as well as those who care for them. For the record, my name is Julie Scholz, and I write on behalf of OPS; we strongly endorse HB 2508. This bill would support telemedicine services in pediatric clinics and ensure easier access to care in the future for patients who benefit from telehealth.

The COVID-19 pandemic has inspired herculean efforts by Oregon's primary and specialty medical care clinics, and behavioral health providers, to continue to see patients safely. In a very short time, pediatric and adult clinics and providers pivoted and developed in-person and telehealth visit protocols and services to keep patients healthy. As the mental health impacts of the national disaster became more severe, mental health visits using virtual technology (video, phone, text) skyrocketed and proved to be extremely effective and popular. Although health care providers will continue to offer in-person patient or client visits, telehealth is not going away after this pandemic is contained. Patients – especially those in underserved areas -- will demand the flexibility and access to professionals it offers.

It is crucial that the Oregon Health Plan and commercial insurers support permanent telehealth payments in parity with in-person visits so that health care providers are fairly compensated for their time and medical home innovation investments, and continue to offer quality telehealth services to patients. It's a victory for health care transformation with increasing patient satisfaction and outcomes, and decreasing health care costs through preventive care.

OPS urges the members of this committee and the Oregon legislature to vote yes on HB 2508. If the Oregon Pediatric Society physician members can be a resource to you on this or other legislative issues, please contact Julie Scholz at julie.scholz@oraap.org.