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April 26, 2021

Senate Committee on Health Care  
900 Court St, NE  
Salem, OR 97301

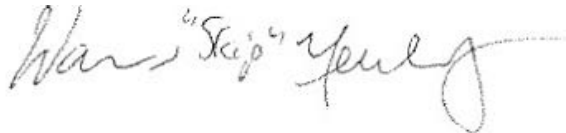
Dear Chair Patterson, Vice-Chair Knopp, and committee members,

I am submitting this letter in support of HB 2508A on behalf of the Technology Association of Oregon (TAO). TAO is the force behind the regional tech industry—supporting entrepreneurs, connecting peers and decision makers, and helping establish the Northwest as a global hub for innovation. Numbered among TAO's tech company members are the vast majority of major hospital systems in Oregon, digital health startups, as well as some of the leading medical device and biotech firms in the world. TAO's core purpose is to drive technology enablement to create an inclusive, world-class innovation ecosystem in Oregon. Fundamental to this mission is ensuring equitable access to the tech infrastructure that enables all Oregonians to receive critical services such as healthcare. To the end, TAO supports HB 2508A, expanding the coverage of, and reimbursement for, telemedicine services in Oregon.

The expanded use of virtual care health services (both synchronously, e.g. eConsults, and asynchronously, e.g. virtual counseling sessions) have been proven to increase access to primary and specialty care for vulnerable patients while yielding significant return on investments by reducing transportation costs, missed appointments, unnecessary referrals, emergency room visits and hospital admissions. This has proved especially true in the last year as patients and providers turned to telemedicine to meeting physical and behavioral health care need during a global pandemic. The populations served by health centers and small practices are vulnerable to gaps in care, especially access for the most vulnerable Oregonians: homebound elderly, rural communities, and those working to manage behavioral health issues, including substance use disorder. Permanent statutory clarity that virtual care services are covered must be provided to ensure that these patients continue to have access to needed health care. By permanently extending telehealth coverage requirements, provider and payers will be able to implement vital innovations and deliver necessary care despite geographic and transportation barriers.

Updating Oregon statutes to provide coverage parity for telemedicine is critical in achieving health equity for providers and patients. To that end, TAO respectfully encourages the members of the Senate Committee on Human Services to vote in support of HB 2508A. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Skip Newberry". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail on the letter "y".

Skip Newberry

President & CEO, Technology Association of Oregon