



February 13, 2025

The Honorable Deb Patterson
Chair, Senate Committee on Health Care
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court St. NE, S-411,
Salem, Oregon 97301

The Honorable Cedric Hayden
Vice-Chair, Senate Committee on Health Care
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court St. NE, S-315,
Salem, Oregon 97301

RE: ATA ACTION SUPPORT OF SB 822

Dear Chair Patterson, Vice-Chair Hayden and members of the Senate Committee on Health Care:

On behalf of ATA Action, I am writing you to express our support for Senate Bill 822 regarding network adequacy.

ATA Action, the American Telemedicine Association's affiliated trade association focused on advocacy, advances policy to ensure all individuals have permanent access to telehealth services across the care continuum. ATA Action supports the enactment of state and federal telehealth policies to secure telehealth access for all Americans, including those in rural and underserved communities. ATA Action recognizes that telehealth and virtual care have the potential to truly transform the health care delivery system – by improving patient outcomes, enhancing safety and effectiveness of care, addressing health disparities, and reducing costs – if only allowed to flourish.

Senate Bill 822 takes a rational step forward for Oregon insurance and telehealth policy by allowing telemedicine health care providers, under the discretion of the Department of Consumer and Business Services, to be included in meeting network adequacy standards for health benefit and dental-only plans. Allowing telemedicine providers to help meet network adequacy requirements will make it easier for Oregon patients to get the care that they need and promote increased patient flexibility in choice, insurance coverage, and care options. Ensuring increased access to telemedicine providers for Oregon patients will also be a crucial tool in addressing Oregon's shortage of health professionals. As of October 2024, data from the Health Resources & Services Administration found all of but one of Oregon's counties to be experiencing some form of a health professional shortage area for primary care, 11 counties as partial shortage

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areas, and the remaining 24 counties experiencing shortage areas in the whole county.¹ These provider shortages are even more pronounced for mental health professionals with all but two Oregon counties facing whole county shortage areas.² By providing the Department of Consumer and Business Services the ability to include telehealth providers in network adequacy standards, these shortages will become easier to address, especially in rural areas.

Telehealth has proven to be a safe and effective tool to deliver care and allows patients to access care when they need it, regardless of their location. Telehealth care can be effectively utilized to meet the standard of care for a wide variety of patient needs, specialist treatment, mental healthcare, and primary care visits. The use of telehealth has grown tremendously in recent years with patients being overwhelmingly happy with their telehealth treatment.³ ATA Action believes states should continue to take actions, like those in SB 822, that promote patient choice and flexibility in their healthcare decisions including making healthcare as accessible as possible through policies that support telehealth and telemedicine.

Thank you for your support of telehealth. We encourage you to support this legislation. Please let us know if there is anything that we can do to assist you in your efforts to adopt practical telehealth policy in Oregon. If you have any questions or would like to engage in additional discussion regarding the telehealth industry's perspective, please contact me at kzebley@ataaction.org.

Sincerely,

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kyle Zebley", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Kyle Zebley
Executive Director
ATA Action

¹ Health Professional Shortage Areas: Primary Care, by County, 2024 – Oregon, Rural Health Information Hub, accessed February 11, 2025, <https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/charts/5?state=OR>.

² Health Professional Shortage Areas: Mental Health, by County, 2024 – Oregon, Rural Health Information Hub, accessed February 11, 2025, <https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/charts/7?state=OR>.

³ Telehealth Emerges as Preferred Channel for Routine Care While Increasing Access to Mental Health Treatment, J.D. Power Finds, September 29, 2022, <https://www.jdpower.com/business/press-releases/2022-us-telehealth-satisfaction-study>.