



February 29, 2016

The Honorable Brian Schatz
United States Senate
722 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Diane Black
U.S. House of Representatives
1131 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Sen. Schatz and Rep. Black:

On behalf of the American College of Physicians (ACP), I am writing to express our support for the CONNECT for Health Act, S. 2484 and H.R. 4442. The legislation would substantially expand the use of telemedicine and remote patient monitoring (RPM) services by physicians and other clinicians to improve care of patients enrolled in Medicare. ACP strongly supports this objective and greatly appreciates your efforts to make telemedicine and RPM services more accessible.

The American College of Physicians is the largest medical specialty organization and the second-largest physician group in the United States. ACP members include 143,000 internal medicine physicians (internists), related subspecialists, and medical students. Internal medicine physicians are specialists who apply scientific knowledge and clinical expertise to the diagnosis, treatment, and compassionate care of adults across the spectrum from health to complex illness.

ACP supports the expanded role of telemedicine as a method of health care delivery that may enhance patient–physician collaborations, improve health outcomes, increase access to care and members of a patient's health care team, and reduce medical costs when used as a component of a patient's longitudinal care. ACP also supports lifting geographic site restrictions that limit reimbursement of telemedicine and telehealth services by Medicare to those that originate outside of metropolitan statistical areas or for patients who live in or receive service in health professional shortage areas.

- Accordingly, ACP supports the Act's creation of a program that would allow Medicare providers (Merit-based Incentive (MIPS)-eligible professionals and qualifying Alternative Payment Model (APM) participants) to furnish telemedicine and RPM services to their Medicare patients not subject to those restrictions under current law.
- The College also supports the Act requiring that Medicare cover the use of RPM services by Medicare providers for certain Medicare beneficiaries with chronic conditions. ACP believes that the use of RPM services for patients with chronic conditions could help control and manage those conditions and improve the health outcomes for those patients while lowering costs.

- Lastly, the ACP supports lifting geographic site restrictions for telestroke evaluation and management sites where the Medicare beneficiary is located. ACP believes that expanding the use of telemedicine for Medicare stroke is an area where evidence supports cost-effectiveness, safety, and positive health outcomes associated with telemedicine. Additionally ACP has previously supported stroke telehealth services in chronic care policy options.

We appreciate your continued leadership on this important issue and will make every effort to help advance this necessary legislation. We stand ready to serve as a resource and welcome the opportunity to work with you going forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Wayne J. Riley".

Wayne J. Riley, MD, MPH, MBA, MACP
President

Cc: House and Senate original cosponsors