A BILL FOR AN ACT

CONCERNING REIMBURSEMENT FOR HEALTH CARE SERVICES PROVIDED THROUGH TELEHEALTH, AND, IN CONNECTION THEREWITH, MAKING AN APPROPRIATION.

Bill Summary

(Note: This summary applies to this bill as introduced and does not reflect any amendments that may be subsequently adopted. If this bill passes third reading in the house of introduction, a bill summary that applies to the reengrossed version of this bill will be available at http://leg.colorado.gov.)

The bill prohibits a health insurance carrier from:

! Imposing specific requirements or limitations on the technologies used to deliver telehealth services;

! Requiring a covered person to have a previously established patient-provider relationship with a specific
provider in order to receive medically necessary telehealth services from the provider; or

! Imposing additional certification, location, or training requirements as a condition of reimbursement for telehealth services.

The bill specifies that, to the extent the state board of health adopts rules addressing supervision requirements for home care agencies, the rules must allow for supervision in person or by telemedicine or telehealth.

For purposes of the medicaid program, the bill:

! Clarifies the methods of communication that may be used for telemedicine;

! Requires the department of health care policy and financing to reimburse rural health clinics, the federal Indian health service, and federally qualified health centers for telemedicine services provided to medicaid recipients and to do so at the same rate as the department reimburses those services when provided in person; and

! Specifies that health care and mental health care services include physical therapy, occupational therapy, hospice care, home health care, and pediatric behavioral health care.

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Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Colorado:

SECTION 1. Legislative declaration. (1) The general assembly finds that:

(a) On March 27, 2020, the federal government enacted the "Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act" ("CARES Act"), Pub.L. 116-136, Stat. 281 (2020), pursuant to which Colorado received approximately $1,674,000,000 from the federal coronavirus relief fund to use for necessary expenditures incurred due to the current COVID-19 public health emergency;

(b) On May 18, 2020, the Colorado governor issued Executive Order 2020 D 070, transferring $70,000,000 from the state "CARES Act" fund to the state general fund for eligible expenditures;

(c) The expenditures in this bill are considered an allowable use
under the federal "CARES Act" and are necessary to respond to the
COVID-19 public health emergency; and

(d) The expenditures in this bill were not accounted for in the
Colorado state budget most recently approved as of March 27, 2020, and
all of the expenses will be incurred on or before December 30, 2020.

(2) The general assembly further finds and declares that:

(a) The expenditures in this bill will be used to protect the health
and safety of both caregivers and patients by ensuring that access to
telehealth services are available to all Coloradans;

(b) Due to the unanticipated effects of COVID-19, many patients
have been unable or unwilling to seek out care through in-person settings;

(c) The need to access health care services is compounded by the
challenges associated with COVID-19, as Coloradans are experiencing
the negative effects the pandemic has on physical, mental, and emotional
health that will extend into future years; and

(d) Access to telehealth is vital to ensuring the continuity of
physical, mental, and behavioral health care for Coloradans during the
COVID-19 pandemic and responding to any future outbreaks of the virus.

SECTION 2. In Colorado Revised Statutes, 10-16-123, amend
(2)(e) and (4)(e); repeal (4)(c) and (4)(d); and add (4)(b.5) as follows:

10-16-123. Telehealth - definitions. (2) (e) A carrier shall not:

(I) Impose an annual dollar maximum on coverage for health care
services covered under the health benefit plan that are delivered through
telehealth, other than an annual dollar maximum that applies to the same
services when performed by the same provider through in-person care;

(II) IMPOSE SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS OR LIMITATIONS ON THE
TECHNOLOGIES THAT A PROVIDER USES TO DELIVER TELEHEALTH
SERVICES, INCLUDING LIMITATIONS ON AUDIO OR LIVE VIDEO TECHNOLOGIES;

(III) REQUIRE A COVERED PERSON TO HAVE A PREVIOUSLY ESTABLISHED PATIENT-PROVIDER RELATIONSHIP WITH A SPECIFIC PROVIDER IN ORDER FOR THE COVERED PERSON TO RECEIVE MEDICALLY NECESSARY TELEHEALTH SERVICES FROM THE PROVIDER; OR

(IV) IMPOSE ADDITIONAL CERTIFICATION, LOCATION, OR TRAINING REQUIREMENTS ON A PROVIDER AS A CONDITION OF REIMBURSING THE PROVIDER FOR PROVIDING HEALTH CARE SERVICES THROUGH TELEHEALTH.

(4) As used in this section:

(b.5) "REMOTE MONITORING" MEANS THE USE OF SYNCHRONOUS OR ASYNCHRONOUS TECHNOLOGIES TO COLLECT OR MONITOR MEDICAL AND OTHER FORMS OF HEALTH DATA FOR INDIVIDUALS AT AN ORIGINATING SITE AND ELECTRONICALLY TRANSMIT THAT INFORMATION TO PROVIDERS AT A DISTANT SITE SO PROVIDERS CAN ASSESS, DIAGNOSE, CONSULT, TREAT, EDUCATE, PROVIDE CARE MANAGEMENT, SUGGEST SELF-MANAGEMENT, OR MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING A COVERED PERSON'S HEALTH CARE.

(c) "STORE-AND-FORWARD TRANSFER" MEANS THE ELECTRONIC TRANSFER OF A PATIENT'S MEDICAL INFORMATION OR AN INTERACTION BETWEEN PROVIDERS THAT OCCURS BETWEEN AN ORIGINATING SITE AND DISTANT SITES WHEN THE PATIENT IS NOT PRESENT.

(d) "SYNCHRONOUS INTERACTION" MEANS A REAL-TIME INTERACTION BETWEEN A PATIENT LOCATED AT THE ORIGINATING SITE AND A PROVIDER LOCATED AT A DISTANT SITE.

(e) (f) "TELEHEALTH" MEANS A MODE OF DELIVERY OF HEALTH CARE SERVICES THROUGH HIPAA-COMPLIANT TELECOMMUNICATIONS SYSTEMS,
including information, electronic, and communication technologies AND
REMOTE MONITORING TECHNOLOGIES, to facilitate the assessment,
diagnosis, consultation, treatment, education, care management, or
self-management of a covered person's health care while the covered
person is located at an originating site and the provider is located at a
distant site. The term includes:

(A) Synchronous interactions;
(B) Store-and-forward transfers; and
(C) Services provided through HIPAA-compliant interactive
audio-visual communication or the use of a HIPAA-compliant application
via a cellular telephone:

(H) "Telehealth" does not include the delivery of health care
services via:

(A) Voice-only telephone communication or text messaging;
(B) Facsimile machine; or
(C) Electronic mail systems.

SECTION 3. In Colorado Revised Statutes, 25-27.5-104, add
(1.5) as follows:

25-27.5-104. Minimum standards for home care agencies and
home care placement agencies - rules - advisory committee. (1.5) To
the extent the state board rules adopted pursuant to
subsection (1) of this section address supervision requirements
for home care agencies, the rules must allow for supervision in
person or by telemedicine or telehealth.

SECTION 4. In Colorado Revised Statutes, 25-54-102, amend
(2)(a) as follows:

25-54-102. Statewide system for advance directives created -
rules. (2) (a) Upon the request of an individual, or authorized surrogate
decision-maker, a qualified provider that has an agreement with the health
information organization network as required under the federal "Health
Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996", Pub.L. 104-191,
as amended, may upload the individual's advance health care directive to
the system. The advance health care directive shall only be uploaded to
the system by a qualified provider after the individual or authorized
surrogate decision-maker has consulted with the qualified provider in
person or through telehealth, as defined in section 10-16-123 (4)(e)(1)
SECTION 10-16-123 (4)(e). A qualified provider who uploads an
advance health care directive to the system is not subject to civil or
criminal liability or regulatory sanction for action taken in accordance
with this subsection (2).

SECTION 5. In Colorado Revised Statutes, 25.5-5-320, amend
(1) introductory portion; and add (2.1), (2.5), and (6) as follows:

25.5-5-320. Telemedicine - reimbursement - disclosure
statement - definition - repeal. (1) On or after July 1, 2006, in-person
contact between a health care or mental health care provider and a patient
shall not be required under the state's medical assistance program for
health care or mental health care services delivered through telemedicine
that are otherwise eligible for reimbursement under the program.
Telemedicine may be provided through interactive audio,
interactive video, or interactive data communication, including
but not limited to telephone, relay calls, interactive
audiovisual modalities, and live chat, as long as the
technologies are compliant with the federal "Health Insurance
Portability and Accountability Act of 1996" Pub.L. 104-191, as
AMENDED. The HEALTH CARE OR MENTAL HEALTH CARE services shall be
are subject to reimbursement policies developed pursuant to the medical
assistance program. This section also applies to managed care
organizations that contract with the state department pursuant to the
statewide managed care system only to the extent that:

(2.1) (a) For the purposes of reimbursement for services
provided by home care agencies, as defined in section 25-27.5-102
(3), the services may be supervised through telemedicine or
telehealth.

(b) (I) The state department shall not seek federal
reimbursement for the services provided pursuant to subsection
(2.1)(a) of this section from July 1, 2020, through December 30,
2020.

(II) This subsection (2.1)(b) is repealed, effective January
1, 2021.

(2.5) (a) (I) A telemedicine service meets the definition of
a face-to-face encounter for a rural health clinic, as defined in
the federal "Social Security Act", 42 U.S.C. sec. 1395x (aa)(2). The
reimbursement rate for a telemedicine service provided by a
rural health clinic must be set at a rate that is no less than the
medical assistance program rate for a comparable face-to-face
encounter or visit.

(II) A telemedicine service meets the definition of a
face-to-face encounter for a medical care program of the
federal Indian health service. The reimbursement rate for a
telemedicine service provided by a medical care program of the
federal Indian health service must be set at a rate that is no
LESS THAN THE MEDICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM RATE FOR A COMPARABLE FACE-TO-FACE ENCOUNTER OR VISIT.


(b) (I) THE STATE DEPARTMENT SHALL NOT SEEK FEDERAL REIMBURSEMENT FOR THE SERVICES PROVIDED PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION (2.5)(a) OF THIS SECTION FROM JULY 1, 2020, THROUGH DECEMBER 30, 2020.

(II) THIS SUBSECTION (2.5)(b) IS REPEALED, EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2021.

(6) (a) AS USED IN THIS SECTION, "HEALTH CARE OR MENTAL HEALTH CARE SERVICES" INCLUDES SPEECH THERAPY, PHYSICAL THERAPY, OCCcupational therapy, hospice care, home health care, and pediatric behavioral health care.

(b) (I) THE STATE DEPARTMENT SHALL NOT SEEK FEDERAL REIMBURSEMENT FOR THE EXPANSION OF SERVICES LISTED IN SUBSECTION (6)(a) OF THIS SECTION FROM JULY 1, 2020, THROUGH DECEMBER 30, 2020.

(II) THIS SUBSECTION (6)(b) IS REPEALED, EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2021.

SECTION 6. Appropriation. For the period from July 1, 2020, through December 30, 2020, $5,068,381 is appropriated to the department
of health care policy and financing. This appropriation is from the care
subfund in the general fund. To implement this act, the department may
use this appropriation for telemedicine expansion services.

SECTION 7. Safety clause. The general assembly hereby finds,
determines, and declares that this act is necessary for the immediate
preservation of the public peace, health, or safety.