

HCS HB 710 -- TELEMEDICINE

SPONSOR: Knight

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on Health and Mental Health by a vote of 13 to 0.

The following is a summary of the House Committee Substitute for HB 710.

Currently, the establishment of a physician-patient relationship for purposes of telehealth includes an interview and a physical examination. Under this bill, an evaluation is still required, but a physical examination is required only if needed to meet the standard of care.

Current law prohibits the use of an internet or telephone questionnaire completed by a patient from constituting an acceptable medical interview for the provision of treatment by telehealth. This bill permits such questionnaires if the information provided is sufficient as though the medical evaluation was performed in person, and provided that the physician is employed or contracted with a business entity licensed to provide health care in this state.

When a health care provider uses an online or telephone questionnaire the provider must send a written report to the primary care provider if the patient provides their primary care provider information. The report must be sent within 14 days of the appointment and contain specified information, including the diagnosis and any treatment.

Current law requires a physician-patient relationship for purposes of telehealth to include a sufficient dialogue with the patient regarding treatment. This bill changes "dialogue" to "exchange" with the patient regarding treatment.

Finally, current law prohibits a health care provider from prescribing any drug, controlled substance, or other treatment to a patient based solely on an internet request or questionnaire. Under this bill, a health care provider must not prescribe any drug, controlled substance, or other treatment to a patient in the absence of a proper provider-patient relationship.

The following is a summary of the public testimony from the committee hearing. The testimony was based on the introduced version of the bill.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that this will allow the use of a digital platform to connect patients to providers when the standard of care can be met through the use of that technology, and the law already sets out what is and is not permissible for an acceptable medical evaluation.

Testifying in person for the bill were Representative Knight; Mercy; Arnie C. Dienoff; SSM Health; Susan Gray MD; Missouri Nurses Association; Missouri Hospital Association; and National Council State Boards Of Nursing.

OPPONENTS: Those who oppose the bill say that this would hinder more people from being able to obtain health care services by limiting the types of telemedicine sites and requiring that the standard of care more closely match traditional, in-person methods of establishing a patient-physician relationship.

Testifying in person against the bill were George Hubbell, Missouri State Medical Association; Missouri Academy of Family Physicians; and Missouri Association of Osteopathic Physicians and Surgeons.

Written testimony has been submitted for this bill. The full written testimony and witnesses testifying online can be found under Testimony on the bill page on the House website.