

MAINE



PSYCHOLOGICAL  
ASSOCIATION

May 9, 2017

To: The Committee on Health and Human Services

From: Elise Magnuson, Psy.D. President, Maine Psychological Association

Re: LD 1485 "An Act Regarding MaineCare Coverage for Telehealth Services"

Sen. Brakey, Rep. Hymanson, members of the Committee, the Maine Psychological Association (MePA) is a membership organization representing psychologists in Maine who work in private practice, at Maine's colleges and universities, and in the public sector. Our mission is to advance psychology as a science, as a profession, and as a means of promoting health and human welfare. Please accept the following comments on LD 1485 "An Act Regarding MaineCare Coverage for Telehealth Services".

Psychologists in Maine today are using telehealth more and more to accommodate their patients, especially in the more rural areas of the state. The American Psychological Association in 2013, in response to the more widespread use of technology in the provision of mental health services, adopted "Guidelines for the Practice of Telepsychology". These guidelines frame the consideration of legal requirements, ethical standards, telecommunication technologies and other external considerations for psychologists' practice.

We support LD 1485 because it establishes some needed changes to how insurers handle telehealth. We concur that health insurers should cover telehealth in the same manner as face to face clinical services. Our members tell us that currently most of the insurers they deal with do cover telehealth services, but that some cover the clinical service at a lower reimbursement rate. We believe that there is no rationale for this, and we urge the Committee to require parity for in person and telehealth provision of services.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.