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Senator Kahn Introduces Bill aimed at Equity for Telemedicine

CONCORD - Yesterday, Senator Jay Kahn (D-Keene) introduced SB 555 to the Senate Commerce Committee. SB 555 continues New Hampshire's telemedicine expansion and clarifies coverage for telehealth and telemedicine services under the Medicaid program and for New Hampshire group health insurers under the telemedicine act. If enacted, all group health insurance providers in New Hampshire would provide coverage and reimbursement for health care services provided through telemedicine on the same basis as in person services.

SB 555 follows the recent hearing of Senator Kahn's bill, SB 647 which allows for telehealth consultations and authorization for medically assisted treatment (MAT) without prior in-office examinations for patients who seek addiction treatment through the New Hampshire Doorways sites, state or county corrections facilities and VA, and other approved healthcare clinics.

After the hearing, prime sponsor Senator Jay Kahn (D-Keene), issued the following statement:

"Telemedicine improves access to health care by ensuring timely and efficient delivery without regard to location or health care provider availability. However, data shows we are underutilizing telehealth services and one primary disincentive is not reimbursing healthcare providers at the same rate regardless of an in-office or telehealth consultation. The bill allows for originating and distant sites to share in telehealth fees that shall not be any more or less than 100% of an in-office visit. By delivering services in the most timely way, we avoid the higher costs of treating more costly cases, such as cutting the time to treat a stroke victims or more regularly checking for high blood pressure."

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