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ATA PRESIDENT, DR. JOE KVEDAR, TESTIFIES AT SENATE COMMITTEE HEARING ON TELEHEALTH

Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions
Telehealth: Lessons from the COVID-19 Pandemic

WASHINGTON, DC, JUNE 17, 2020 – [American Telemedicine Association](#) (ATA) President, [Joseph C. Kvedar, MD](#), testified today before the full Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) on telehealth, urging policymakers to “take specific actions before the end of the public health emergency to make access to telehealth services permanent.”

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Congress and the federal government have removed many of the antiquated barriers to telehealth that have traditionally kept providers from reaching their patients remotely. As a result, telehealth has saved lives, helped reduce the spread of the virus, and enabled providers to scale the response of an overwhelmed health system during the pandemic. During today’s hearing, senators asked witnesses how these regulatory flexibilities have improved access to care and what policies should remain permanent when the public health emergency ends.

To ensure patients—including Medicare beneficiaries—continue to be empowered with the option to use telehealth, Dr. Kvedar and the ATA are urging Congress to move quickly to enact targeted telehealth reform legislation before the public health emergency declaration is rescinded.

“I have seen first-hand the many ways telehealth bridges the gap between a critical provider shortage and a growing patient population – a problem that existed prior to the pandemic, and one that will only worsen,” said Kvedar, Professor, Harvard Medical School, Senior Advisor, Virtual Care, Mass General Brigham (Partners HealthCare), and ATA President. “However, we need Congress’s support to ensure patients and providers do not go over the telehealth ‘cliff’ as our nation eventually emerges from the pandemic. We must make sure that essential telehealth services do not abruptly end with the public health emergency, especially as we look to reorient our healthcare system to deliver 21st century care.”

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Dr. Kvedar's full testimony is available [here](#). A recording of today's full hearing can be found [here](#).

Also testifying today was former ATA President Karen S. Rheuban, MD, Professor of Pediatrics, Senior Associate Dean of Continuing Medical Education, and Director, University of Virginia Karen S. Rheuban Center for Telehealth.

About the ATA

As the only organization completely focused on advancing telehealth, the [ATA](#) is committed to ensuring that everyone has access to safe, affordable, and appropriate care when and where they need it, enabling the system to do more good for more people. ATA represents a broad and inclusive member network of health care delivery systems, academic institutions, technology solution providers and payers, as well as partner organizations and alliances, working to advance industry adoption of telehealth, promote responsible policy, advocate for government and market normalization, and provide education and resources to help integrate virtual care into emerging value-based delivery models. Visit the [ATA COVID-19 Resource Center](#). @americantelemed #gotelehealth #ATApolicy

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