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John A. Olszewski, Jr.
County Executive



BALTIMORE COUNTY COMMISSION FOR WOMEN

January 25, 2021

Committee: Senate Finance Committee

Bill: SB 3 – Preserve Telehealth Access Act of 2021

Position: Support

Dear Members of the Senate Finance Committee:

We are writing to express strong support from the Baltimore County Commission for Women for Senate Bill 3, presently before the House Health and Government Operations Committee. The Baltimore County Commission for Women advocates for women's issues and works to remove inequities in such areas as housing, recreation, employment, education, and community services.

The COVID-19 emergency provisions related to telehealth services have significantly helped to close gaps in accessing healthcare. Data from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services show that delivery of telehealth services for Medicaid and CHIP beneficiaries rose 2,600% between March and June 2020 compared to the same period in 2019. Senate Bill 3 helps to ensure that those benefiting from the changes in telehealth services continue to do so. This includes valuable aspects such as allowing for appropriate health care services through an audio-only format and removing originating and distant site restrictions.

The Baltimore County Commission for Women is grateful to have the opportunity to support this exciting legislation that we expect will significantly ease the lives of women, children, and families both across Baltimore County and the State of Maryland. Through simply eliminating the need to travel for a healthcare appointment, significant burdens of scheduling and time as well as transportation can be alleviated. As the mother of two young children myself, this bill would help immensely with the difficulties of scheduling frequent medical appointments for my daughters while also working full time.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable report for Senate Bill 3. We are happy to assist in any way possible as further considerations are made. Please feel free to contact me at agottheimer@gmail.com or 443-831-8702 if we can be of any further assistance. Thank you for your support of this important bill.

Handwritten signature of Audrey H. Potter in black ink, written in a cursive style.

Audrey H. Potter

Baltimore County Commission for Women