

Support

House Bill 551 – Maryland Medical Assistance Program and Health Insurance Coverage and Reimbursement of Telehealth

House Health and Government Operations Committee

February 10, 2021

Planned Parenthood of Maryland (PPM) supports *House Bill 551 – Maryland Medical Assistance Program and Health Insurance Coverage and Reimbursement of Telehealth*. The bill provides for fair and consistent reimbursement policies for telehealth after the public health emergency. In particular, the bill provides for payment of audio-only visits, which are critical for individuals without access to computers or broad band.

During the pandemic, PPM has used telehealth to ensure our clients can continue to receive family planning services:

- **PrEP:** Telehealth, including asynchronous platforms, can expand access to PrEP. As with birth control, many individuals may be anxious to ask their providers about PrEP in a face-to-face encounter, so asynchronous communication increases accessⁱ;
- **Birth Control:** Our patients have continued to receive birth control without the interruption of coming to the office to make a visit. They can receive birth control from a mail order pharmacy or at a local pharmacy;
- **Uncomplicated UTIs:** Some sexually transmitted infections, such as uncomplicated urinary tract infections (UTIs), can be treated without an in-person visit. Untreated UTIs can impact future fertility and result in emergency room visits.

PPM asks for a favorable vote on the bill. We want Maryland to move forward, not backwards, in implementing telehealth. We care about the overall health, beyond birth control, of our patients. They deserve for their health care providers to be utilizing all the available communication tools. If we can provide any further information, please contact Robyn Elliott at (443) 926-3443.

ⁱ Touger, R. & Wood, B.R. Curr HIV/AIDS Rep (2019) 16: 113. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11904-019-00430-z>.