
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO TELEHEALTH.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that telehealth adoption
2 in Hawaii is increasing. The report of findings from the 2017
3 Hawaii Physician Workforce Assessment Project estimates that
4 approximately fifteen per cent of providers report a telehealth
5 experience, which is an increase from 2014 of less than five per
6 cent. This rate increase coincides with the enactment of Act
7 159, Session Laws of Hawaii 2014, and Act 226, Session Laws of
8 Hawaii 2016, both of which increased telehealth adoption such as
9 reimbursement parity with face-to-face visits and malpractice
10 coverage reform.

11 However, despite this favorable policy environment,
12 telehealth utilization remains frustratingly low. A continuum
13 of issues across multiple sectors must be addressed, such as
14 incentives for provider adoption, patient comfort with new
15 technology, health care workforce training, technology and
16 telecommunications infrastructure, and administrative
17 simplification between health systems.



1 Therefore, the purpose of this Act is to establish
2 permanent resources to achieve Hawaii's goal of establishing
3 telehealth as a community standard for health care access.

4 SECTION 2. **Definitions.** As used in this Act, unless the
5 context requires otherwise:

6 "Telehealth" means the use of telecommunications services,
7 as defined in section 269-1, Hawaii Revised Statutes, to
8 encompass four modalities: store and forward technologies,
9 remote monitoring, live consultation, and mobile health; and
10 which shall include real-time video conferencing-based
11 communication, secure interactive and non-interactive web-based
12 communication, and secure asynchronous information exchange, to
13 transmit patient medical information, including diagnostic-
14 quality digital images and laboratory results for medical
15 interpretation and diagnosis, for the purpose of delivering
16 enhanced health care services and information while a patient is
17 at an originating site and the health care provider is at a
18 distant site. Standard telephone contacts, facsimile
19 transmissions, or e-mail text, in combination or by itself, does
20 not constitute a telehealth service for the purposes of this
21 part.



1 **SECTION 3. State telehealth policy, roles, and**
2 **responsibilities.** (a) It shall be the policy of the State to
3 promote telehealth to deliver health care from a distance as an
4 effective way of overcoming certain barriers to accessing care,
5 particularly for communities located in rural and remote areas.

6 (b) The department of health is authorized to lead
7 statewide efforts to assure consumer choice, reduce disparities
8 in access to care, enhance health care provider availability,
9 and improve quality of care through telehealth.

10 **SECTION 4. State strategic telehealth advisory council.**

11 (a) There is established within the department of health for
12 administrative purposes the state strategic telehealth advisory
13 council. The advisory council shall advise the governor in the
14 development and implementation of a comprehensive plan to
15 establish telehealth as high quality, cost-effective, and
16 reliable means of health care access.

17 (b) The membership of the state strategic telehealth
18 advisory council shall not exceed eleven members who shall be
19 appointed by the governor without regard to section 26-35,
20 Hawaii Revised Statutes. The director of health or a designee



1 shall serve as an ex officio nonvoting member of the advisory
2 council.

3 (c) In establishing the advisory council, the governor
4 shall appoint at least:

5 (1) Two members of organizations that represent health
6 care facilities, one of whom shall be a representative
7 of a hospital;

8 (2) Two members of organizations that represent health
9 insurers; one of whom shall be a representative of an
10 organization that primarily serves medicaid
11 beneficiaries;

12 (3) One member of an organization that represents
13 broadband infrastructure or telecommunications
14 services;

15 (4) One member from the office of the governor;

16 (5) Two members of long-term care service providers, one
17 of whom shall be a representative of a nursing home
18 and one of whom shall be a representative of a home
19 health agency or community-based health services
20 program;



1 (6) Two health care practitioners, each of whom practices
2 primarily in a rural county; and

3 (7) One member of an organization that represents mental
4 health service providers;

5 provided that there shall be at least one state strategic
6 telehealth advisory council member from each county in the
7 State. The advisory council shall select a chairperson from
8 among its members.

9 The members shall serve without compensation, but shall be
10 reimbursed for actual expenses, including travel expenses, that
11 are necessary for the performance of their duties.

12 (d) The number of members necessary to constitute a quorum
13 to do business shall consist of a majority of all members who
14 have accepted the nomination to the advisory council. When a
15 quorum is in attendance, the concurrence of a majority of the
16 members in attendance shall make any action of the council
17 valid.

18 (e) The state strategic telehealth advisory council shall
19 be exempt from chapter 92, Hawaii Revised Statutes.

20 SECTION 5. **State telehealth coordinator.** (a) There is
21 established a full-time state telehealth coordinator to support



1 the state strategic telehealth advisory council. The state
2 telehealth coordinator shall facilitate the establishment of
3 infrastructure and policies across all agencies of the State and
4 private sector to promote the expansion of telehealth in the
5 State, including:

- 6 (1) Providing administrative support to the state
7 strategic telehealth council;
- 8 (2) Coordinating with the department of commerce and
9 consumer affairs on issues relating to professional
10 and vocational licensing and insurance regulation as
11 they relate to telehealth;
- 12 (3) Coordinating with the department of commerce and
13 consumer affairs and department of business, economic
14 development, and tourism on broadband connectivity;
- 15 (4) Coordinating with the department of education,
16 department of public safety, department of human
17 services, Hawaii employer-union health benefits trust
18 fund, and other state agencies that finance or provide
19 health care services to promote the use of telehealth;



- 1 (5) Coordinating with the University of Hawaii and other
2 agencies on telehealth research to assure quality,
3 cost effectiveness, and efficacy;
- 4 (6) Coordinating with the department of labor and
5 industrial relations, University of Hawaii, department
6 of education, and other agencies to encourage a
7 telehealth-capable workforce;
- 8 (7) Coordinating with the office of enterprise technology
9 services on matters related to cybersecurity; and
- 10 (8) Coordinating with the private sector to ensure
11 alignment and consistency with state goals.
- 12 (b) The coordinator shall be selected by the director of
13 health.

14 SECTION 6. **Telehealth administrative simplification**
15 **working group.** (a) The department of health shall establish
16 and convene a telehealth administrative simplification working
17 group to research and make recommendations to reduce
18 administrative barriers to telehealth, which may include health
19 care system credentialing, privileging, and other processes that
20 contribute to delays and inefficiencies for health care
21 providers delivering care to patients. The telehealth



1 administrative simplification working group shall be exempt from
2 part I of chapter 92, Hawaii Revised Statutes.

3 The telehealth administrative simplification working group
4 shall submit a final report of its findings and recommendations,
5 including any proposed legislation, to the legislature no later
6 than twenty days before the convening of the regular session of
7 2020.

8 SECTION 7. There is appropriated out of the general
9 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$110,000 or so much
10 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2019-2020 and the
11 same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year
12 2020-2021 for the establishment of one full-time equivalent (1.0
13 FTE) permanent state telehealth coordinator position within the
14 department of health.

15 The sums appropriated shall be expended by the department
16 of health for the purposes of this Act.

17 SECTION 8. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2050
18 provided that:

- 19 (1) Section 7 shall take effect on July 1, 2050; and
20 (2) This Act shall be repealed on January 1, 2022.



Report Title:

Telehealth; Strategic Telehealth Advisory Council; State
Telehealth Coordinator; Working Group; Appropriation

Description:

Establishes goals for the adoption and proliferation of telehealth to increase health care access. Establishes the Strategic Telehealth Advisory Council and permanent full-time equivalent State Telehealth Coordinator position. Establishes the telehealth administrative simplification working group to research, make recommendations, and report to the legislature. Appropriates funds. Repeals 1/1/2022. Effective 7/1/2050.
(SD2)

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