



February 24, 2021

The Honorable Lisa Blunt Rochester
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Michael C. Burgess, M.D.
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

RE: Support for the Telehealth Improvement for Kids' Essential Services (TIKES) Act

Dear Representative Blunt Rochester and Representative Burgess:

On behalf of the Oncology Nursing Society (ONS), we write to thank you for introducing the Telehealth Improvement for Kids' Essential Services (TIKES) Act, which would provide for strategies to increase access to telehealth under the Medicaid program and Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP).

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, telehealth has helped oncology nurses maintain communication and protect vulnerable patients, ensuring the safety and well-being of both patients and staff. Increased access to telehealth in recent months has also facilitated continued participation in clinical trials for many patients, which is often crucial to their care. ONS strongly supports making permanent the flexibilities established in response to the COVID-19 pandemic that expand the use of telehealth services and provide payment parity for telehealth and in-person visits.

In addition to providing states with guidance to increase telehealth access for Medicaid and CHIP populations, your legislation would require studies examining data on the impact of telehealth on these patients and opportunities for better collaboration among federal agency telehealth policies. We would like to offer ONS National Board member Darcy Burbage, DNP, RN, AOCN®, CBCN® Safety and Quality Education Specialist at Christiana Care Health System in Newark, DE as a resource available to share the oncology nursing perspective on the importance of telehealth to increasing patient access to high-quality, efficient medical care.

ONS is a professional organization of over 39,000 registered nurses and other health care providers dedicated to excellence in patient care, education, research, and administration in oncology nursing. ONS members are a diverse group of professionals who represent a variety of professional roles, practice settings, and subspecialty practice areas. Oncology nurses are leaders in the health care arena, committed to continuous learning and leading the transformation of cancer care by advocating for high-quality care for people with cancer.

ONS and its members thank you for your leadership during this ongoing crisis. We would be happy to discuss ways in which ONS may be of assistance and would encourage you to contact Alec Stone, Director of Public Affairs, at astone@ons.org. We look forward to engaging in an ongoing dialogue to address issues of importance to our members and ways in which we can promote public health.

Sincerely,

The Oncology Nursing Society