



NEWS FROM THE HOME CARE ASSOCIATION OF NEW YORK STATE (HCA)

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A Statement from HCA President Al Cardillo: NY Has Allowed Medicaid Home Telehealth Flexibility to Keep Patients & Staff Safe in COVID-19; Washington Should Follow Suit for Medicare

“I greatly commend the New York State Department of Health for employing a broadly flexible and visionary use of telehealth through home health providers to promote patient care as well as worker and patient safety in the COVID-19 emergency.”

“Home care in New York has long led the country in use of telehealth to expand the reach of nursing and therapeutic care and clinical monitoring of patients. New York State has also long permitted home care to bill Medicaid for these services. For the COVID-19 emergency, state officials have even further expanded the state’s Medicaid telehealth flexibility and allowed for coverage. These permissions help reduce the amount of exposure between staff and patients in the home care setting where physical distancing is otherwise impossible. They also provide an extra layer of clinical support for resource-strapped organizations coping with a public health crisis and needing to reach patients in every way possible amid workforce shortages.”

“Under the CARES Act, Congress and the U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) took some preliminary actions to allow home telehealth, but not with the breadth that matches the need or what New York State has done for Medicaid. Under the federal action, telehealth may supplement home care visits for Medicare beneficiaries. But unlike in New York’s Medicaid program, telehealth may not substitute for in-person visits under Medicare.”

“The same permissions under Medicaid need to also occur for Medicare programs, services and beneficiaries in New York State.”

“HCA has been working to support the national efforts of the National Association for Home Care and Hospice (NAHC) to provide for home telehealth flexibility. NAHC has just written to CMS Administrator Seema Verma in a letter co-signed by HCA urging CMS’s support for this critically needed telehealth flexibility in Medicare. I urge the support of New York’s Congressional Delegation to follow New York State’s actions to pass legislation and implementation of full home telehealth flexibility and coverage for Medicare beneficiaries and services.”

HCA is a statewide health organization comprised of nearly 400 member providers and organizations delivering home and community-based care to several hundred thousand New Yorkers annually. HCA works to support providers in the delivery of high quality, cost-effective home and community-based care for the state’s citizens. HCA providers include hospitals, nursing homes, free-standing agencies and health systems which operate Certified Home Health Agencies, Licensed Home Care Services Agencies, Managed Long Term Care Plans, Hospices, Long Term Home Health Care Programs, waiver programs, and an array of allied, supportive services entities.