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September 1, 2022

The Honorable Charles Schumer  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
S-230, The Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mitch  
McConnell  
Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
S-221, The Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20510

**RE: Extension of telehealth flexibilities beyond COVID-19 public health emergency**

Dear Majority Leader Schumer and Minority Leader McConnell:

Established in 1943, the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology (AAAAI) is a professional organization with more than 7,000 members in the United States, Canada and 72 other countries. This membership includes allergist/immunologists (A/I), other medical specialists, allied health and related healthcare professionals—all with a special interest in the research and treatment of patients with allergic and immunologic diseases. The AAAAI urges the Senate to pass legislation to extend telehealth flexibilities for at least two years beyond the COVID-19 public health emergency (PHE).

AAAAI members treat a variety of patients that are at a disproportionately higher risk for serious and potentially life-threatening complications related to COVID-19, including those with compromised immune systems and asthma. Our members are uniquely qualified to diagnose and treat seasonal allergies. During this crisis, the ability for our members to utilize telehealth services to differentiate the symptoms of COVID-19 from seasonal allergies has served as a critical tool in both keeping patients from necessary but potentially dangerous visits to their doctor and relieving the bandwidth issues expected at physician offices, urgent care centers, and emergency rooms across the country. Telehealth waivers and flexibilities have also allowed allergists to increase their reach to more distant and rural communities improving access to care.

As a result of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services' (CMS) numerous virtual care and telehealth flexibilities offered through recent rulemakings related to the COVID-19 pandemic, AAAAI members have

*(more)*

reported increased patient uptake of telehealth and virtual technology platforms that are helping them diagnose, treat, and manage the care of Medicare and Medicaid patients with allergies, asthma, and other respiratory and immunologic diseases. Notably, access to audio-only visits has been essential for beneficiaries, particularly those who face challenges accessing health care due to a variety of social determinants of health, which are not uncommon in the A/I population and for those who are immune-compromised and need to reduce their risk of exposure to SARS-CoV-2.

The AAAAI appreciates that Congress previously ensured that telehealth flexibilities will continue for 151 days after the PHE ends as part of the *Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2022* (P.L. 117-103). This continuity of care is important to our patients and AAAAI is supportive of efforts to extend the current telehealth flexibilities provided by the administration during the PHE and establish a pathway to make these policies permanent. Last month, the House of the Representatives passed H.R. 4040, the *Advancing Telehealth Beyond COVID-19 Act*, which would extend telehealth flexibilities for two-years beyond the expiration of the PHE. The AAAAI urges the Senate to advance this legislation to extend these flexibilities for at least two years.

Thank you for your consideration. The AAAAI looks forward to working with you and your staff as issues related to allergies, asthma, and immunological disorders arise and would encourage you to contact Sheila Heitzig, JD, MNM, CAE, AAAAI Director of Practice and Policy, at (414) 272-6071 or [sheitzig@aaaai.org](mailto:sheitzig@aaaai.org) if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Khan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and a long, sweeping underline.

David A. Khan, MD FAAAAI  
President, American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology