

Statement for the Record
American College of Physicians
Markup before the House Energy and Commerce Committee
September 18, 2024

The American College of Physicians (ACP) appreciates the opportunity to submit this statement for the House Energy & Commerce Committee's [markup](#) of the [Telehealth Modernization Act](#), H.R. 7623. We appreciate Chair Rodgers and Ranking Member Pallone for their commitment to bringing this bipartisan legislation forward that would improve patients' access to care and bolster the health care infrastructure. ACP strongly supports extending the telehealth flexibilities that are scheduled to expire at the end of this year. We urge the Energy and Commerce Committee (committee) to support the following policy recommendations, outlined in this statement, to improve American seniors' access to health care services.

ACP is the largest medical specialty organization and the second-largest physician membership society in the United States. ACP members include 161,000 internal medicine physicians, related subspecialists, and medical students. Internal medicine physicians are specialists who apply scientific knowledge, clinical expertise, and compassion to the preventive, diagnostic, and therapeutic care of adults across the spectrum from health to complex illness.

ACP Supports the Telehealth Modernization Act, H.R. 7623

The College supports the use of telehealth as a method of health care delivery that can enhance the patient-physician relationship, improve health outcomes, increase access to care, and reduce medical costs. Telehealth can be an important option for patients who lack access to in-person primary or specialty care due to various social drivers of health such as a lack of transportation or paid sick leave, or insufficient work schedule flexibility to seek in-person care during the day. To preserve patients' access to care, Congress must extend telehealth flexibilities beyond this year.

ACP [strongly supports](#) the Telehealth Modernization Act of 2024. H.R. 7623 would extend existing telehealth flexibilities, that ACP supports, through 2026. This includes the removal of geographic restrictions, expansion of originating sites required for telehealth visits, and audio-only telehealth access. Further, it would allow for Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) and Rural Health Clinics (RHCs) to continue providing telehealth services to American seniors. These centers and clinics play a critical role in increasing access to care for patients across the country. They provide comprehensive care, including primary and preventive care services, for millions of Americans in medically underserved communities.

Moreover, we appreciate the provisions in the bill to reform pharmacy benefit manager (PBM) practices that have contributed to the rising costs of prescription drugs. ACP supports improving transparency, accountability, and competition in PBM practices to reduce the price of prescription drugs for our patients. Prescription drug prices have [increased](#) by more than 10 percent per year for each of the top 20 brand-name drugs prescribed to seniors, and PBMs negotiate rebates from those higher prices. Increased transparency from PBMs and health plans is needed to provide greater understanding of drug prices, help patients make informed decisions, and support a more sustainable health care system. There needs to be greater transparency to reduce confusion about how PBMs work and how they make decisions regarding formularies. This legislation would



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provide much needed clarity on the amount of money PBMs take in and the actual savings that get passed on to patients.

In conclusion, we thank you for the opportunity to offer a clinician perspective on this critical legislation. Should the committee seek input from the physician community, ACP has members who are willing to testify, as internal medicine represents 24 percent of the physician workforce in the United States. We stand ready to serve as a resource to promote these policies as this bill is considered further by the House of Representatives. Should you have any questions, please contact Vy Oxman, Senior Associate of Legislative Affairs, at voxman@acponline.org.