

## HIMSS Supports Telehealth Expansion Act



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The bipartisan H.R.3432 Telemental Health Care Access Act would make significant headway in terms of expanding access to evidence-based telehealth.

With such service expansion, patients in rural and underserved areas will have access to critical mental and behavioural health services. The bill was reintroduced by Reps. Doris Matsui (D-CA) and Bill Johnson (R-OH) on May 16<sup>th</sup> for the 118th Congress.

HIMSS is proud to support the Telemental Health Care Access Act and relieved to see Congress reprioritise mental health. The increasing prevalence of mental health conditions across the U.S. has meant that more is needed to mitigate this rise and provide more opportunity for patients to be treated via telehealth.

The congress may have removed geographic restrictions for remote mental health services, but the requirement that healthcare providers see patients within six months of treatment via remote services remains a potential hurdle.

Fortunately, congress included provisions that delayed this requirement until 2025. Until then patients will be able to fully leverage telehealth to receive the treatment they need remotely.

Statistically, more than 150 million people live in federally designated mental health professional shortage areas. With the significant rise in mental health disorders, it is imperative that access to mental health services are being fully utilised.

By removing additional barriers for these services and tools patients will have more opportunity to seek the help they need. More so, telehealth has the ability to drive operational efficiency by reducing the workload of care teams, shaping patient engagement and improving quality and safety.

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