

REVENUE: No revenue impact

FISCAL: Fiscal statement issued

Action:	Do Pass as Amended and Be Printed Engrossed
Vote:	5 - 0 - 0
Yeas:	Bates, Kruse, Morrisette, Morse, Monnes Anderson
Nays:	0
Exc.:	0
Prepared By:	Robert Shook, Administrator
Meeting Dates:	2/19, 3/26

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES: Requires health benefit plans to provide coverage of medically necessary, evidence-based telemedical health services, if health service is otherwise covered by the benefit plan. Establishes that telemedicine not be limited to medically underserved areas or areas where there is a shortage of specialists.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Deductible, copayment or coinsurance requirements
- Reimbursement to non-covered providers and/or non-covered benefit
- Ability and willingness of consulting physicians to participate
- Increased access to health services in rural and underserved communities
- Efficiencies in health care delivery

EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT: Eliminates the need to list all health professionals by specialty, but was written to allow health benefits based on market demands and evidence-based technological improvements. Establishes that telemedicine not be limited to medically underserved areas or areas where there is a shortage of specialists.

BACKGROUND: Several factors are contributing to health care challenges in Oregon. Having access to health care providers is one of the major issues that need to be addressed. New approaches to tackle this problem include optimal use of the physician workforce and other health care providers, as well as the innovative use of technology. Telemedicine is one of those technological advances that allow a two-way video communication in which the practitioner can directly access the patient. Telemedicine has the potential to help bring preventive care and some types of specialty care to people in the communities where they live, thus eliminating long commutes by patients, and help reduce needless transfers to urban hospitals.

Proponents of the measure assert that the benefits of telemedicine are: increased access to health care services in rural and underserved communities; saves time, travel, and related expenses of going to the physician's office; reduction in hospitalizations, emergency department visits, critical care transports, and other related care costs, and eliminates or reduces duplicate medical testing.