



February 4, 2014

Oregon Senate Health Care Committee
900 Court St. NE, HR A
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Monnes Anderson and members of the committee:

On behalf of LifeWise Health Plan of Oregon, and as a member of the Oregon Telemedicine Reimbursement Expansion Workgroup, I am writing with respect to SB 144, *an act relating to payment of health services*, specifically telemedical health services. LifeWise strongly supports SB 144, which promotes telemedicine and improves access to clinical services for Oregonians. We urge you to pass this bill.

Research shows that telemedicine can reduce costs by providing care through more efficient means. In addition, telemedicine improves access to care in remote locations, improves follow-up care for patients with chronic conditions, and creates a better patient experience by reducing travel time and absenteeism from work.

In addition to our existing coverage for telemedical services, LifeWise launched a new virtual care offering as a covered benefit to all members effective January 1, 2015. LifeWise's virtual care offering will enable members to receive health-related services and information via a variety of telecommunication channels for the purpose of diagnosis and treatment of appropriate urgent care and follow up of chronic conditions. Virtual care can also serve as a resource for prevention, health advice and both case and disease management.

SB 144 is a critical bill to improve access to care, and utilize more cost-effective technologies to deliver essential and timely care to Oregonians.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ted Conklin".

Ted Conklin
Medical Director