



## **MEMORANDUM**

To: Senator Monnes-Anderson, Chair, Senate Committee on Health Care  
Senator Kruse, Co-chair, Senate Committee on Health Care  
Members of the Senate Committee on Health Care

From: Courtni Dresser, OMA Government Relations

Date: February 4, 2015

Re: Support for SB 144

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OMA members understand the importance of telemedical services, especially for rural and underserved patients, and fully support and endorse quality telemedicine services and the reimbursement of these services. OMA was a member of an interim workgroup that developed SB 144. SB 144, which requires health insurers to cover health care services provided using synchronous two-way interactive video conferencing, is a step toward increased utilization of telemedicine by health professionals and greater access to quality care for patients.

As an emerging and transformative technology in the practice of medicine, it is important that telemedicine services follow evidence-based care standards that ensure positive and safe outcomes for the patient. As written in the SB 144, reimbursement would only be provided for services that could be provided “safely and effectively using synchronous two-way video conferencing” and that follow “generally accepted health care practices and standards”. The OMA fully supports any efforts made by the State to establish guidelines for the standard of care of services provided through telemedicine.

The OMA would also like to advocate for continued discussion on the definition of telemedical services and reimbursement for services provided in varied mediums. Advances in technology and increased utilization of telemedical services is likely to result in new and better ways to interact with patients, including secure communications via email, phone, video messaging and patient-monitored home devices. These advances will need to be scrutinized to ensure safe outcomes for patients as well as incentivize providers through reimbursement.

The OMA further supports the bill’s intent to ensure that telemedicine services are compliant with state and federal laws that govern the privacy and security of patient medical information. It is incumbent on the physician or health care professional to protect a patient’s health information, regardless of the medium the information is delivered.

Thank you for your support of SB 144.