



AMERICAN ACADEMY OF
ORTHOPAEDIC SURGEONS

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF
ORTHOPAEDIC SURGEONS

June 8, 2021

The Honorable Mike Thompson
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable David Schweikert
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Peter Welch
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Bill Johnson
United State House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Doris Matsui
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Thompson, Schweikert, Welch, Johnson, and Matsui:

On behalf of the American Association of Orthopaedic Surgeons, we wish to express our support for the “CONNECT for Health Act.” This legislation would enable health care professionals to continue delivering quality telehealth care beyond the public emergency.

The COVID-19 public health emergency (PHE) led to significant growth in the use of telehealth services among surgical specialties, including orthopaedics. Policy changes enacted to temporarily remove many barriers to access for telemedicine during the PHE contributed to this growth. These policies are set to expire at the end of the PHE. Continued access to telehealth services is a critical component to orthopaedic patients, many of whom face mobility issues that make it difficult to see their doctor in person for diagnoses that can be easily delivered via telehealth.

AAOS is particularly supportive of provisions within the CONNECT for Health Act which will permanently remove Medicare’s geographic restrictions for telehealth services and expand originating sites to include the home. AAOS believes that telemedicine services provided through Medicare should not be limited to those in rural areas or those traveling to approved origination sites. Burdensome requirements on patients or health care professionals will only lessen the clinical benefit of these services and reduce access to care. We are also pleased by provisions within the bill which will allow for more services to be covered through telehealth by granting the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) permanent authority to waive telehealth restrictions.

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I thank you for your leadership and introduction of the CONNECT for Health Act to ensure Medicare beneficiaries do not lose critical access to telehealth services following the expiration of the COVID-19 PHE. AAOS appreciates and recognizes your substantial efforts to advance this critical policy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Daniel K. Guy". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Daniel K. Guy, MD, FAAOS
President, American Association of Orthopaedic Surgeons

cc: Felix H. Savoie, III, MD, FAAOS, AAOS First Vice-President
Kevin J. Bozic, MD, MBA, FAAOS, AAOS Second Vice-President
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