



Colorado Psychiatric Society
777 S Wadsworth Blvd, Ste 1-206
Lakewood, CO 80226
Tel: 303-692-8783
Web: www.coloradopsychiatric.org
Email: office@coloradopsychiatric.org

April 30, 2020

The Honorable Cory Gardner
U.S. Senate
354 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510

Dear Senator Gardner:

On behalf of the Colorado Psychiatric Society (CPS) and our 500+ members, I write you to express our support to remove barriers that our patients encounter while trying to access essential treatment through telehealth. Federal efforts to facilitate access to care through audio visual telehealth have been instrumental throughout this pandemic.

However, we are concerned that many of our most vulnerable patients, especially those with serious mental illnesses and the elderly, still face obstacles to accessing this care because they lack the required video technology or live in areas without reliable broadband access. I encourage you to sign the Ernst/Kaine letter urging the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to allow for Medicare to appropriately reimburse for audio-only telehealth visits. CMS allowing for audio-only appointments will enable my patients who do not have access to reliable broadband internet, do not know how to use video platforms, or do not have access to video-supported technology, to access vital mental health and substance use disorder care.

At this time, it is critical that our Medicare patients are able to both social distance and access high quality mental health care. As such, we hope you will join Senators Ernst and Kaine by signing their letter encouraging CMS to revise its telehealth rules so that Medicare patients with mental illness or substance use disorders can access the care they need during this stressful time. To sign on to the letter, please contact Anna Breen in Senator Ernst's office at anna_breen@ernst.senate.gov or Katie Wright in Senator Kaine's office at katie_wright@kaine.senate.gov.

CPS is a co-sponsor of the weekly virtual Physician Town Hall meetings hosted Colorado Medical Society. We appreciate your participation in the meeting on April 1st.

Thank you for your leadership during these difficult times.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patricia Westmoreland", is written over a large, light-colored circular scribble.

Patricia Westmoreland MD
President, Colorado Psychiatric Society