

July 2, 2024

The Honorable Charles Schumer  
Majority Leader  
The United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mike Johnson  
Speaker of the House  
The United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Minority Leader  
The United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries  
Minority Leader  
The United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Majority Leader Schumer, Minority Leader McConnell, Speaker Johnson, and Minority Leader Jeffries:

The Society of Gynecologic Oncology (SGO) appreciates your leadership and efforts to protect patient access to telehealth services and strongly urges Congress to pass legislation now that extends telehealth flexibilities for the next two years. SGO is the premier medical specialty society for healthcare professionals trained in the comprehensive management of gynecologic cancers. Our 2,800 members, who include physicians, nurses, and other advanced practice providers, represent the entire oncology team dedicated to the treatment and care of patients with gynecologic cancers.

Recognizing that the House Ways and Means Committee and the Energy and Commerce Committee have both recently passed bipartisan legislation ([H.R.8261](#) and [H.R.7623](#)) in support of a two-year extension of the telehealth flexibilities, we urge you to act now to pass telehealth extensions that will provide certainty and reassurance to providers and patients who rely on telehealth infrastructure and services. Telehealth flexibilities implemented during the COVID-19 public health emergency have allowed for the provision of medically necessary services to vulnerable patients, and SGO members continue to utilize telehealth to secure and improve access to services for all gynecologic cancer patients. Besides improving access to care, telehealth services also reduce disparities in healthcare access, increasing practice efficiency, reducing no-shows, and improving patient satisfaction.<sup>1</sup>

From the provider's perspective, the telehealth flexibilities established during the COVID-19 pandemic have required medical practices to maintain a new telehealth infrastructure to provide for the delivery of services on which patients continue to rely. By extending these flexibilities now, you will provide certainty to providers by allowing them to plan for the future and make the necessary investments to maintain their telehealth infrastructure. Additionally, given the financial instability of the Medicare Physician Fee Schedule (MPFS), it is crucial to the workforce and patient access to care that Congress provides the certainty of the two-year extension.

Regarding the patient perspective, the use of telehealth technologies allows patients from urban, suburban, and rural communities to access care or continue cancer treatment and surveillance without traveling long distances. For many patients with cancer, the option to see healthcare providers virtually is revolutionizing their cancer care experience. Although it does not entirely replace in-person cancer care,

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.sgo.org/resources/telehealth-and-your-practice-then-now-and-post-pandemic/>

telehealth offers patients and their caregivers' convenience, time and cost savings, less time spent away from work, flexible scheduling, access to specialists who are far, and intangible benefits such as reduced exposure to germs or pathogens.<sup>2</sup> Notably, many cancer patients have extremely compromised immune systems, therefore keeping these patients safe, by treating them from their homes in select cases, is of utmost importance.<sup>3</sup> Telehealth also is helping oncology providers address geographic and other healthcare access disparities. It has allowed more rural cancer patients to stay connected with their providers and receive care from urban comprehensive cancer centers. Additionally, because marginalized populations struggle disproportionately with issues like transportation barriers, time away from work, and competing demands for caregiving, telehealth can ameliorate many of those demands.

Furthermore, telehealth technology reduces patient transfers, emergency department and urgent care center visits, and delivers savings to payers. Using telehealth services, particularly when the visit is a 15-minute follow-up, is extremely valuable. Telehealth may be used for many types of care including providing advanced care planning, test results review, treatment management, evaluation and management services and other services. Ultimately, extending telehealth flexibilities puts patients and their caregivers first, help strengthen patient-healthcare provider relationships, and will also provide benefits to healthcare providers in terms of delivering excellent, modern cancer care to the patients and reducing physician/provider burnout by reducing clinicians' drive times and allowing more time and flexibility for patients.

Thank you again for your leadership and efforts to protect patient access to healthcare services through the expansion of telehealth flexibilities. Telehealth has revolutionized and modernized healthcare delivery and is a vitally important tool to deliver excellent, life-saving, equitable cancer care to more patients than ever. SGO members continue to use telehealth to secure and improve access to services for all gynecologic cancer patients and urge you to act now to pass legislation that extends these flexibilities for the next two years. Should you have any questions or require further information, please contact Erika Miller, Partner, CRD Associates, [emiller@dc-crd.com](mailto:emiller@dc-crd.com).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Amanda Nickles Fader". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Amanda Nickles Fader, MD  
President, Society of Gynecologic Oncology  
[amanda.fader@sgo.org](mailto:amanda.fader@sgo.org)

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9703802/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/38694709/>