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Senator Anwar, Rep. McCarthy Vahey, Senator Somers, Rep. Klarides-Ditria, and members of the Public Health Committee:

As the administrator of the state's largest health plan, I testify in strong support of HB 5198: An Act Concerning Telehealth.

The protections and standards that the legislature mandated during the pandemic for telehealth services were common-sense and bipartisan, and ensured that sick Connecticut residents had virtual access to medical professionals. Whether it was requiring providers to use real-time, two-way communication platforms, or that their doctor had their patient's medical records on hand, these rules helped people get the care that they needed when they were most vulnerable.

The rules and access around telehealth are expiring at the end of this June. This bill will extend Connecticut's current policies to 2027, maintaining the status quo that residents have benefitted from over the last 4 years.

The fact of the matter is that even though COVID no longer dominates our lives, Connecticut residents still depend on telehealth to meet their health needs. For many working people, a thirty-minute check in with their medical provider can be a more efficient and affordable use of their time than physically going into the doctor's office. For providers, it helps manage the volume of patient cases that they deal with, enabling them to reach more people.

That's why the legislature needs to extend our telehealth policies – to ensure that we do everything as public officials to ensure that telehealth providers are held to a high and fair standard, so that patients get the care that they need.

All the best,

Sean Scanlon
State Comptroller