

# Comment Report

HF 88

A bill for an act relating to the provision of audio-only telehealth or telemedicine by health care professionals.(See HF 431.)

Subcommittee Members: Moore, T.-CH, Bradley, Sunde

Date: 01/26/2021

Time: 04:30 PM

Location: House Lounge 2

**Name:** Steve Cassabaum

**Comment:** As a licensed physical therapist since 1989, in Iowa since 1995, I had never thought I would be using telehealth services. However, during the last 10 months I have used this method to affectively, albeit sparingly, to interact with patients during the Covid pandemic. Most insurance payers have allowed audio only or telephone only telehealth visits during the pandemic and continue to allow this form of interaction. Many patients, especially low income and elderly patients do not have the financial and/or technological know how to communicate via computer for their telehealth visits. However, most if not all patients can and will communicate via simple phone or facetime via their smart phones. This ability has alleviated the barriers that some of our patients have and allowed treatment and important communication to keep our patients more healthy and safe. I encourage passage of this bill for this continued benefit to the general public in their ability to assess health care in times such as the last 10+ months. This means of telehealth can also be important on days like these that frequently occur during Iowa winters. This mode of telehealth is the fastest, most efficient, less costly and most importantly, accessible to all Iowans! Thank you. Respectfully, Steve Cassabaum, DPT

**Name:** Renee Schulte

**Comment:** As an LMHC myself, I was skeptical of audio only until the pandemic. The use of audio only has been a huge benefit to clients. It has increased access for those who struggle with connectivity. We often think that is just in rural Iowa, but I know of and live in a DSM suburb that has struggled with internet access since families have been home for school and work. We have been told stories of farmers being in the field during harvest able to call in for medication refills and rechecks when they could not get video connection. We have heard stories of many due to weather. COVID and other challenges who could not make it into the office, could still get high quality care that they need. NAMI Iowa and the Iowa Mental Health Counselors Assoc support this bill and thank Rep Fry for bringing it forward.

**Name:** Denise Rathman, MSW

**Comment:** Iowa social workers are currently allowed to perform audioonly services. The National Association of Social Workers, Iowa Chapter supports of HF 88. Here is the language from our Rules of conduct: 645282.2(154C) Rules of conduct.282.2(1) Informed consent.The provision of social work services to an individual in this state through any electronic means, including the Internet, telephone, or the Iowa Communications Network or any fiberoptic media, regardless of the location of the licensee, shall constitute the practice of social work in the state of Iowa and shall be subject to regulation in accordance with Iowa Code chapters 147 and 154C and the administrative rules of the board. A licensee who provides services via electronic media shall inform recipients of the limitations and risks associated with such services.Please vote Yes on HF 88.

