
Health Care & Wellness Committee

HB 1708

Brief Description: Concerning facility fees for audio-only telemedicine.

Sponsors: Representatives Cody, Riccelli, Bateman, Macri, Tharinger and Pollet.

<p>Brief Summary of Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prohibits a hospital that is an originating site for audio-only telemedicine from charging a facility fee.
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Hearing Date: 1/12/22

Staff: Emily Poole (786-7106).

Background:

Audio-only telemedicine is the delivery of health care services through the use of audio-only technology, permitting real-time communication between a patient at their physical location (the "originating site") and a health care provider, for the purpose of diagnosis, consultation, or treatment.

In addition to professional fees for provider services, certain originating sites for audio-only telemedicine may charge a separate facility fee for infrastructure costs and preparation of the patient, subject to certain conditions. A hospital acting as an originating site may not charge the following payors a facility fee for the use of audio-only telemedicine: a health plan offered by a health carrier; a health plan offered to school or state employees; a Medicaid managed care plan; or a behavioral health administrative services organization.

Audio-only telemedicine does not include the use of facsimile or electronic mail, or the delivery of health care services that are customarily delivered by audio-only technology and customarily

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not billed as separate services by the provider, such as the sharing of laboratory results.

Hospitals are facilities licensed by the Department of Health (DOH) to provide accommodations and services over a continuous period of 24 hours or more for observation, diagnosis, or care. To obtain and maintain a license, a hospital must meet DOH standards related to patient care, medical staff, infection control, and mandatory reporting related to patient care and financial information. In the event that a DOH investigation or survey identifies noncompliance with hospital standards, the DOH may require the hospital to submit a plan of correction to address each of the deficiencies. In addition, the DOH is authorized to deny, suspend, revoke, or refuse to renew a license or provisional license.

Summary of Bill:

A hospital that is an originating site for audio-only telemedicine may not charge a facility fee, regardless of payor.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.