



July 12, 2019

Dear Representative:

Telehealth services are an integral part of the health care system today. When utilized properly, they expand access, particularly for Medicare beneficiaries in rural and underserved areas, and can reduce costs for patients with chronic conditions like chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), a costly disease that is extremely prevalent in Medicare users. Expanding Medicare coverage of telehealth services and removing barriers to access for necessary and appropriate telehealth services provided by respiratory therapists is addressed in H.R. 2508, the Better Respiration through Expanded Access to Tele-Health Act (the BREATHE Act). The undersigned organizations respectfully request your co-sponsorship of this legislation.

Introduced by Representatives Mike Thompson (D-CA), Mike Kelly (R-PA), TJ Cox (D-CA) and Buddy Carter (R-GA), the BREATHE Act would expand Medicare coverage of telehealth services for COPD and remove barriers to access to necessary and appropriate telehealth services provided by respiratory therapists. Respiratory therapists as telehealth practitioners play a critical role in providing patient education and self-management services via telehealth, thus improving patient care while reducing costs.

If enacted, the BREATHE Act has the potential to improve health outcomes of patients with COPD and lower associated costs. The three-year pilot will allow for the collection of critical data that CMS can use to determine the value of including qualified respiratory therapists as telehealth practitioners under the Medicare program to improve health outcomes, reduce unnecessary emergency department visits and hospital admissions/readmissions, and lower the cost of care provided to patients with COPD. The pilot will also allow respiratory therapists to reach beneficiaries that do not currently have access to their expertise, which is critical for improving the health outcomes of COPD patients.

Please support this legislation to enable more patients with COPD to access telehealth services, specifically those delivered by respiratory therapists. For further information or to cosponsor, please

contact Crozer Conner at crozer.conner@mail.house.gov in Rep. Thompson's office; Kevin Dawson at kevin.dawson@mail.house.gov in Rep. Kelly's office; Amanda Stayton at Amanda.stayton@mail.house.gov in Rep. Cox's office; and Jay Gulshen at jay.gulshen@mail.house.gov in Rep. Carter's office.

Thank you for your consideration.

Allergy and Asthma Network
ALPHA-1 Foundation
American Association for Cardiovascular and Pulmonary Rehabilitation
American Association for Homecare
American Association for Respiratory Care
American College of Chest Physicians
American Lung Association
American Telemedicine Association
American Thoracic Association
COPD Foundation
National Association for Medical Direction of Respiratory Care
Respiratory Health Association
Society of Critical Care Medicine
The FACES Foundation
The Dorney-Koppel Foundation
U.S. COPD Coalition