February 17, 2022

Dear Senators Cortez Masto and Young,

On behalf of AMGA and our multispecialty medical groups and integrated system of care, which represent about 177,000 physicians who care for over one in three Americans, I want to thank you for introducing S. 3593, the Telehealth Extension and Evaluation Act. We appreciate your proposal to extend Medicare’s telehealth policy two years beyond the conclusion of the public health emergency (PHE). AMGA supports your legislation, and we look forward to working with you and your colleagues to ensure this bill is signed into law.

At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, AMGA members changed the way they deliver care by eliminating elective surgeries and procedures and keeping patients away from their facilities. As a result, telehealth services expanded significantly, allowing providers to reach patients in unprecedented ways. A recent survey of AMGA members found an almost 20% increase in telehealth utilization among primary specialties throughout the pandemic. The majority of telehealth appointments were for chronic care and mental health services. After over two years of the pandemic, our members’ patients have come to expect telehealth services as a standard of care delivered by their provider.

As you know, the Medicare program allows for the use of telehealth technologies, but it is contingent upon a 90-day PHE, which is often renewed near the day of expiration. Although we appreciate policymakers granting Medicare temporary authority to provide these services, providers need stability in the system to use the technology as part of our innovative delivery models, which promote patient convenience and safety. Congress should now recognize the important role that telehealth has in a modern healthcare system by passing S. 3593 to extend telehealth services for an additional two years.

Thank you for supporting the vital work of our nation’s healthcare providers by introducing S. 3593. AMGA and our members stand ready to assist you in securing its passage. We appreciate your leadership on this issue.

Sincerely,

Jerry Penso, M.D., M.B.A.
President and Chief Executive Officer
AMGA