

HOUSE HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE
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Testimony Supporting House Bill 2512
Melissa Panettiere
Director of Governmental Affairs
Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas City

Chairman Hawkins and Members of the Committee, my name is Melissa Panettiere and I am here today on behalf of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas City to testify in support of House Bill 2512 .

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas City is a not-for-profit health plan serving residents in the greater Kansas City area, including Johnson and Wyandotte counties in Kansas and 30 counties in Northwest Missouri. Our mission is to use our role as the area's leading health insurer to provide affordable access to healthcare and improve the health and wellness of our members. The ability to provide affordable coverage is difficult given the new rules and taxes that are imposed under the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Telehealth is one of the many initiatives that can help keep coverage affordable if it is used appropriately.

Many states are enacting laws requiring commercial health plans to cover medical services provided via telehealth to the same extent they cover medical services provided in-person. These laws are intended to promote innovation and care delivery in the private sector by catalyzing healthcare providers and plans to invest in and use the powerful telehealth technologies available in the marketplace. It is encouraging this year's version does not go so far as to mandate *payment* parity between telehealth providers and in-person providers, which prevented us from being supportive of past telemedicine legislation. However, this version expands what services must be covered under the definition of "telemedicine". We view this legislation as a good starting point and we respectfully request the committee to consider the removal of the term "interactive audio" in order for us to remain supportive during the legislative process.

While Blue KC embraces the use of telemedicine for our members we are concerned with expanding what services would be required under this bill, specifically the use of "interactive audio". The mandate to cover interactive audio would include phone calls between a patient and a physician. We are unaware of any states that include this service in their telemedicine mandates. However, should the committee adopt an amendment removing "interactive audio" from the definition of telemedicine we could fully support moving this legislation forward.

Blue KC is committed to implementing innovative programs for our members in order to keep the cost of care down while at the same time ensuring members have access to the care they



need. Telemedicine is one approach in accomplishing this goal and we look forward to working with the legislature to help address this issue.

I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.