

RESOLUTION
Telemedicine/Telehealth Expansion

A RESOLUTION TO: Expand telemedicine/telehealth services and reimbursement for telemedicine/telehealth home health services and services into skilled nursing facilities.

WHEREAS, As persons age their need for health services tends to increase as their capacity to access those services tends to decrease, and, therefore, those most in need of health services, even those able to pay for the services, are often unable to obtain services because of the unavailability of health services within reasonable distance of their residences; and

WHEREAS, The advances in technology has made high quality telemedicine/telehealth services technologically feasible, medically efficacious, and financially acceptable, and with the removal of the impediments included in current CMS Medicare rules and regulations, this technology can be made available to older persons not only in Texas but across the nation, who in 2003 alone consumed over \$150 billion in health care expenditures for home health and skilled nursing home care; and

WHEREAS, Expanding Medicare reimbursement for telemedicine/telehealth services for home health care would allow older persons to remain in their homes longer, increase their independence, and reduce their need for expensive inpatient chronic care, and expanding telemedicine/telehealth services into skilled nursing facilities would significantly lessen the requirement that high acuity nursing home patients cope with the trauma and expense of travel to physicians' offices, clinics, and hospitals to obtain health care services that can be readily and effectively rendered through telemedicine/telehealth technology often at less cost and with less likelihood of additional trauma to the nursing home patient; now therefore be it,

RESOLVED, That the Texas Silver-Haired Legislature requests that the 80th Texas Legislature pass a Concurrent Resolution urging the Texas Congressional delegation to support federal legislation requiring the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to take substantive and affirmative actions to expand telemedicine/telehealth services, especially the initiation and/or expansion of Medicare reimbursement for telemedicine/telehealth home health services and services into skilled nursing facilities.

PASSED AND APPROVED this 13th day of September, 2006, by the Health and Human Resources Committee.

Glen Provost, Chair

PASSED AND APPROVED this 14th day of September, 2006, by the Texas Silver-Haired Legislature.

Charlotte Parks, Speaker

ATTEST:

Carlos Higgins, Secretary