

June 7, 2023

The Honorable Brian Schatz
722 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Roger Wicker
425 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Ben Cardin
509 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Thune
511 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mark Warner
703 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Cindy Hyde-Smith
702 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Schatz, Wicker, Cardin, Thune, Warner and Hyde-Smith,

On behalf of Vizient, Inc., I am pleased to offer our endorsement for the Creating Opportunities Now for Necessary and Effective Care Technologies (CONNECT) for Health Act of 2023. Your important, bipartisan legislation would expand, enhance and ensure permanent access to telehealth services for Medicare beneficiaries.

Vizient is the nation's largest healthcare performance improvement company. Vizient provides solutions and services that improve the delivery of high-value care by aligning cost, quality, and market performance for more than 60% of the nation's acute care providers, which includes 97% of the nation's academic medical centers and more than 25% of ambulatory providers. Vizient provides expertise, analytics, and advisory services, as well as a contract portfolio that represents more than \$130 billion in annual purchasing volume, to improve patient outcomes and lower costs. Headquartered in Irving, Texas, Vizient has offices throughout the United States.

During the COVID-19 public health emergency (PHE), the administration offered a range of flexibilities to support widespread adoption and awareness of telehealth nationwide. While many of these flexibilities were set to expire at the end of the PHE, Vizient was pleased Congress approved legislation that extended many of the Medicare telehealth flexibilities through December 31, 2024. While this step was welcome to avoid immediate disruptions in care, it remains a temporary solution, and additional flexibility and clarity is still needed.

The CONNECT for Health Act would implement several provisions to expand access to telehealth on a permanent basis by removing geographic requirements for telehealth services and expanding originating sites to include the patient's home and other clinically appropriate sites. In addition, it would permanently allow Federally Qualified Health Centers and Rural Health Clinics to furnish telehealth services as distant site providers and remove the six-month in-person visit requirement for telemental health services. The Department of Health and Human Services would also be granted flexibility to expand access and quickly increase the services available to be offered through telehealth in future public health emergencies. These provisions and many more in the CONNECT for Health Act make its passage a priority.

While our hospital members have taken substantial steps to expand telehealth services, uncertainty remains as the sustainability of many of those programs could be in jeopardy if Congress does not act to extend those flexibilities set to expire after 2024. Your legislation would ease many of those concerns, and Vizient is proud to offer our support.

Thank you for your leadership in introducing this bill. Please do not hesitate to contact me at shoshana.krillow@vizientinc.com or 202-354-2607 if you have any questions about Vizient or if there is any way we can be of assistance in advancing your important legislation.

Sincerely,



Shoshana Krillow
Senior Vice President, Public Policy & Government Relations