



**Kansas Hospital
ASSOCIATION**

To: Legislative Budget Committee

From: Jennifer Findley, Vice-President Education and Special Projects
Audrey Dunkel, Vice-President Financial Advocacy

Date: August 3, 2020

Re: SPARK Funding for Telemedicine Connectivity

On behalf of the 123 community hospitals in Kansas, KHA would like to share how important the use of telemedicine has been to help keep patients safe and communities healthy during the COVID-19 pandemic. We have seen the use of these services grow significantly over the past few months and are supportive of efforts that allow for continued expansion of telemedicine.

KHA believes every Kansan deserves access to quality health care. Telemedicine is one way to ensure access, regardless of location or circumstances. Telemedicine brings many benefits to Kansas. Below are just a few examples that we would like to highlight.

Patient Perspective

- Prevents unnecessary exposure for high-risk patients
- Access to care when needed
- Saves time, travel and other expenses
- Better integration and coordination of services

Provider Perspective

- Prevents unnecessary exposure of health care workers
- Front-line support in the emergency room
- Accuracy of diagnosis and reduction of medical errors
- Increased efficiency
- Access to specialty care for patients and communities

Employers Perspective

- Less “lost work” time
- Preventative treatment helps avoid costlier services later
- Employee satisfaction

Economic Development and Quality of Life

- Keeps dollars in the local economy
- Aids in business recruitment and retention
- Workforce development/jobs
- Assists with healthcare workforce recruitment and retention

KHA is supportive of efforts that remove barriers to telemedicine activities and expand and enhance the infrastructure necessary to support telemedicine. Additionally, we know that hospitals need financial support for increased bandwidth

and equipment purchases to expand their telemedicine programs within their communities.

Additionally, KHA has been engaged in activities of the Statewide Broadband Expansion Planning Task Force and encourages the Legislative Budget Committee to review the Task Force's recommendations. As that report suggests, creating a broadband funding program administered by the Department of Commerce would be an excellent way to ensure funds go to those areas of the state most in need.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.