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June 29, 2022

The Honorable Adrian Smith
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kelly Armstrong
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tom O'Halleran
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Smith, O'Halleran, and Armstrong,

The American Academy of Neurology (AAN) is the world's largest association of neurologists and neuroscience professionals, with 38,000 members. The AAN is dedicated to promoting the highest quality patient-centered neurologic care. One in six people lives with a brain or nervous system condition, including Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, stroke, epilepsy, traumatic brain injury, ALS, multiple sclerosis, and headache.

The AAN applauds you for introducing H.R. 7876, the Connecting Rural Telehealth to the Future Act. As physicians across the country continue to utilize telehealth to care for their patients, it is imperative that continued access and stability is available after the public health emergency (PHE) declaration sunsets. Telehealth allows doctors to converse with patients who may not otherwise have the accessibility or time to arrive at a physician's practice. Even in more urbanized communities, telehealth has proven to be an invaluable resource.

Telehealth bridges the gap between patient and doctor, which has been especially important due to the COVID-19 pandemic threatening to destroy such a connection. Extending telehealth flexibilities through the end of 2024 will give Congress and other policy makers time to gather additional data to support a permanent extension. Telehealth should remain available and accessible to patients and doctors alike after the PHE has ended. The AAN also applauds you for your support of audio-only delivery of care, which allows broader accessibility to these essential services. According to a [Pew Research study](#), almost 7% of American adults don't use the internet, of which 25% are 65 years old or above. Audio-only allowance is critical to making sure these and other vulnerable populations are not left behind.

The rapid adoption of telehealth has been a major innovation during the COVID-19 pandemic and has become an incredible resource for both doctors and patients alike. We appreciate the work you have done and will continue to do in support of this issue. If you have any additional questions, feel free to contact our Director of Congressional Affairs, Derek Brandt, at dbrandt@aan.com. We look forward to continuing to work with you on the issue of telehealth, as well as future projects.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Orly Avitzur MD". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Orly Avitzur, MD, MBA, FAAN
President, American Academy of Neurology