This month, Senate Bill 2395 (Act 226), introduced by Senator Rosalyn Baker, was signed into law by Governor David Ige. This law marks an important milestone for telehealth in Hawaii and provides the foundation for increasing telehealth utilization and promoting increased access to critical services for patients across the State of Hawaii.

Governor David Ige signs SB2395, Relating to Telehealth into Law

According to the National Telehealth Resource Center focused on policy (Center for Connected Health Policy), with this new law Hawaii is "one of the most progressive states in terms of telehealth policies." (See the full CCHP Newsletter HERE).

This law builds upon the work of the 2016 Telehealth Policy Workshop, co-sponsored by the Pacific Basin Telehealth Resource Center and U.S. Senator Brian Schatz in January 2016 where health care stakeholder input was collected. The new comprehensive law lifts many of the long-standing barriers to the advancement of telehealth in Hawaii. Highlights of the law include:

- Requires the State's medicaid managed care and fee-for-service programs to cover services
provided through telehealth;
• Specifies medical professional liability insurance policy requirements with regard to telehealth coverage;
• Clarifies that reimbursement for services provided through telehealth shall be equivalent to reimbursement for the same services provided via face-to-face contact between a health care provider and a patient;
• Ensures that telehealth encompasses store and forward technologies, remote monitoring, live consultation, and mobile health;
• Ensures that telehealth is covered when originating in a patient's home and other non-medical environments; and
• Other amendments related to telehealth for clarity.

Press Coverage:

• University of Hawaii press release, click HERE.
• Center for Connected Health Policy newsletter, click HERE.
• American Telemedicine Association article, click HERE.
• To read the law in its entirety, click HERE.

Pictured (L-R): Senator Rosalyn Baker, Hawaii State Legislature; Christina Higa, Co-Program Director, PBTRC; Governor David Ige, State of Hawaii; Deborah Birkmire-Peters, Co-Program Director, PBTRC

Medicare CY 2017 Physician Fee Schedule Released

On July 7, 2016, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services released their proposed Medicare Physician Fee Schedule for CY 2017. This year, CMS proposed expanding eligible telehealth services by adding the following 6 new telehealth codes for reimbursement:

• End-Stage Renal Disease Codes 90967, 90968, 90969, and 90970
• Advance Care Planning Codes 99497 and 99498

CMS also proposed to create two new G-codes to reflect the resource costs of providing critical care consultation services remotely to critically ill patients. The codes, GTTT1 and GTTT2, would be used for initial and subsequent services to describe critical care consultations delivered via telehealth.

For more information, read the CCHP July Newsletter, HERE.

Upcoming Events

Webinar: Changing Healthcare Delivery:
UMMC Center for Telehealth on the Rise
8:00am

AHRQ Technical Brief on Telehealth

Telehealth: Mapping the Evidence for Patient Outcomes from Systematic Reviews

To view the brief, click HERE.