July 16, 2020

The Honorable Tina Smith
United States Senate
720 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Smith:

On behalf of the American Society of Hematology (ASH), I write to you today to voice support for S. 3741, the Health Care at Home Act and urge quick passage of this legislation. The COVID-19 public health emergency has highlighted the need for expanded telehealth services as patients and physicians continue to follow recommendations to stay home and work remotely, when possible. The ability to utilize telemedicine services, however, remains limited for many patients without legislative approval for health plans regulated by the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA) to cover telehealth services.

Access to care via telehealth allows many individuals, but especially, those at high-risk for contracting COVID-19, to receive care in the safety of their homes. Many health plans have taken significant steps to provide coverage and reimbursement for telehealth services; however, limited access and a lack of uniformity remain among plans governed by ERISA. S. 3741 would make it possible for patients covered by ERISA plans to access the care they need without having to increase their risk of exposure. The legislation also importantly outlines that this coverage should include requiring that services provided via telehealth be reimbursed at the same rate as in-person visits.

ASH joins many others in the physician community, including the American Medical Association, in supporting this important piece of legislation. As the U.S. continues to deal with the COVID-19 crisis, it is imperative that individuals continue to receive the health care they need in a way that is the most effective for them, whether that be through traditional office visits or via telemedicine. ASH urges the Senate to pass S. 3741, the Health Care at Home Act.

Thank you in advance for your attention to this important matter. If the Society can ever serve as a resource, please reach out to Leslie Brady, ASH Policy and Practice Manager, at lbrady@hematology.org or 716-361-2764 (cell).

Sincerely,

Stephanie J. Lee, MD, MPH
President