



March 26, 2020

Governor Andrew Cuomo  
The Executive Chamber  
Capitol  
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo:

Thank you for all that you and your staff are doing to protect New Yorkers as we respond to the COVID-19 crisis. We write regarding an issue that is affecting our community health organizations, which play an essential role in promoting the wellbeing of residents of our communities, by providing trusted, linguistically and culturally competent healthcare.

Under current State regulations, telehealth appointments are not eligible for Medicaid wrap payments because, in normal times, telehealth appointments typically augment in-person visits rather than replacing them. Given the COVID-19 crisis, the State's public health officials have mandated telehealth appointments for patients, in lieu of in-person appointments. Under these circumstances, telehealth appointments require the same amount of resources and the same number of staff that in-person appointments would require, and they are the safest and most effective way for clinics and health care centers to provide care to patients.

We urge you to modify State regulations to make full-length telehealth appointments eligible for the same types of state-funded coverage as in-person appointments, at least for the duration of the COVID-19 crisis. Covering telehealth appointments would enable clinics and healthcare centers to protect New Yorkers without risking a loss of funding at a time when their services are critically needed.

If you or your staff would like to discuss this matter further, please feel free to contact any of us directly or via Eliana Cohen in Senator Kavanagh's office, at 212-298-5565.

Sincerely,

Brian Kavanagh

cc: Howard Zucker, Commissioner, New York State Department of Health