



**New York State**  
Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics

 an affiliate of the  
Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics

March 5, 2021

Honorable Aileen Gunther  
Legislative Office Building  
Room 826  
Albany, New York 12248

Dear Assemblywoman Gunther,

The New York State Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics represents more than 5,000 registered dietitian nutritionists (RDNs), nutrition and dietetic technicians, registered (NDTRs) and other food and nutrition professionals who are committed to improving the health of New Yorkers through research, education and delivery of health care services. RDNs and NDTRs are essential to the treatment and prevention of chronic diseases. RDNs and NDTRs are dedicated to improving population health and ensuring that safe and effective medical nutrition therapy (MNT) is delivered to patients and consumers based on the best science, data and evidence.

We are writing to you today in support of legislation you sponsor (A.4839), relating to requiring services provided via telehealth to be reimbursed at the same rate as an in-person office visit. As you are aware, telehealth visits encourage both the clinician and patient to provide and receive safe and efficient health care services under normal health conditions, but especially during these challenging pandemic times. Providing services virtually has been a lifeline for many patients over the course of this last year. In fact, in response to patient safety, many providers have seen their practices move to 100% virtual.

In terms of nutrition services, the availability of telehealth visits encourages consumers with chronic diseases in need of nutrition intervention to seek out the nutritional support required to prevent disease complications. The RDN assesses and plans the appropriate medical nutrition therapy based on the patient's medical condition. The MNT implemented will promote healing and optimal physical and nutritional health. Many chronic conditions such as diabetes, cardiovascular, renal disease and recovery from the COVID-19 virus, the registered dietitian nutritionist works together with the patient's physician to support the medical care that is already in place. Telehealth reimbursements have actually encouraged timely health care interventions and as a result potentially reduced the need for emergency care or repetitive hospitalizations, keeping overall health care costs down, while improving patient outcomes.

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**New York State Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics**

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Similar to other healthcare providers, RDN's provide the same effective health care services via telehealth as in person. The telehealth visits are efficient, effective and timely for the patients. If patients and consumers do not have the insurance reimbursement available to them for the nutritional support, they will not seek the warranted care and as a result will compromise their health and complicate their disease symptoms. In turn, if providers are not reimbursed at a fair rate, they may have to make the difficult decision not to provide the service to those without adequate insurance coverage or worse, drop insurance coverage all together causing even less access to these services to those who need it most because they cannot afford to do so as a regular practice.

Telehealth payment parity in NYS is both good for patient care and has the secondary benefit of being a fiscally strong decision. This will ultimately keep health care costs down through encouraging patients to seek the preventive care covered fairly, through their insurance.

NYSAND applauds your efforts to develop uniformity of fee structure for reimbursement. We would like to support your efforts for this legislation to ensure there are clear policies in place for the patients, consumers and health care providers. Please let us know how we can assist you in moving this legislation forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "MaryLou K. Plante".

MaryLou K. Plante, MS, RD, CDN, FAND

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