

FLORIDA ASSOCIATION OF ORTHODONTISTS

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May 14, 2019

The Honorable Ron DeSantis, Governor
State of Florida
Plaza Level 05, The Capitol
400 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0001

Dear Governor DeSantis:

On behalf of the Florida Association of Orthodontists (FAO) and our 650 members, I urge you to veto House Bill (HB) 23 on telehealth.

HB 23 does not require out-of-state telehealth providers to be held to the same standards as Florida licensed health care providers. The bill would only require them to register with the Department of Health (DOH) or their respective health care board instead of going through the licensure process. Florida licensed health care providers are subject to fees and other related costs to practice in this state, while this bill allows out-of-state telehealth providers to just register and not be subject to these costs. HB 23 does not provide any measures where an out-of-state telehealth provider would be subject to the DOH emergency suspension orders; therefore, jeopardizing the safety of Florida patients. HB 23 does not require insurance companies to reimburse for telehealth services as in-person services and does not provide any direction or guidelines on payments to providers using telehealth. Under commercial insurance policies, as well as the Medicaid program, there are procedures and processes outlined in statute relating to prompt payment of claims and other safeguards related to reimbursement for services rendered. HB 23 does not address any of these issues at all. Furthermore, the bill does not provide any mechanisms to prevent out-of-state telehealth providers from dictating and directing ancillary providers to work outside of their scope of practice, which could be different from Florida laws depending on where the out-of-state telehealth provider is licensed.

The FAO believes that Florida citizens could benefit from telehealth services, but not under the provisions in HB 23. In order for telehealth to be implemented statewide, legislation adopted into law must consider input from the workforce willing to participate in this modality and as evident during the numerous committee hearings during the 2019 legislative session, health care provider groups all agreed that HB 23 is not the infrastructure or foundation for telehealth in Florida.

For the reasons outlined in this letter, the FAO does not support HB 23 and urge you to veto HB 23.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Shreena Patel', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Shreena Patel, DMD
FAO President

Annual Meeting: March 6-8, 2020
Meeting Chairman – Dr. Henry Rozen