

116TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 5257

To direct the Federal Communications Commission to establish a program to be known as the “Expanding Telehealth Program”.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NOVEMBER 22, 2019

Mr. COX of California introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce

A BILL

To direct the Federal Communications Commission to establish a program to be known as the “Expanding Telehealth Program”.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Telehealth Expansion
5 Act of 2019”.

6 **SEC. 2. EXPANDING TELEHEALTH PROGRAM.**

7 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—Not later than 90 days after
8 the date of the enactment of this Act, the Commission
9 shall establish a program to be known as the “Expanding
10 Telehealth Program”.

1 (b) PURPOSES OF PROGRAM.—The purposes of the
2 Program are—

3 (1) to support connected care services for low-
4 income individuals, individuals residing in rural
5 areas, and veterans through telehealth services and
6 health care providers;

7 (2) to defray the costs of internet services to
8 health care providers to provide connected care serv-
9 ices to low-income individuals, individuals residing in
10 rural areas, and veterans with conditions such as be-
11 havioral health conditions, opioid dependency, chron-
12 ic health conditions (such as diabetes, kidney dis-
13 ease, heart disease, stroke recovery, and traumatic
14 brain injury), mental health conditions, cancer, and
15 high-risk pregnancies;

16 (3) to promote innovative telehealth services
17 technologies by empowering health care providers to
18 connect directly with patients; and

19 (4) to gather data and information on medical
20 conditions, transitions of care services, telehealth
21 services, and health care provider resources or needs
22 that may be considered in potential reforms needed
23 to improve the efficiency or effectiveness of the Pro-
24 gram.

1 (c) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 1 year
2 after the establishment of the Program, the Commission
3 shall submit to congressional committees of jurisdiction a
4 report on the impacts of the Program on access to health
5 care services, improvements in the health status of pa-
6 tients, and the cost-effectiveness of the Program. The re-
7 port shall also include recommendations to Congress on
8 policy reforms needed or ways to improve telehealth serv-
9 ices, including telehealth services provided to low-income
10 individuals, individuals residing in rural areas, veterans,
11 and other underserved populations.

12 (d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

13 (1) COMMISSION.—The term “Commission”
14 means the Federal Communications Commission.

15 (2) INTERNET SERVICE.—The term “internet
16 service” has the meaning given the term “broadband
17 internet access service” in section 8.1(b) of title 47,
18 Code of Federal Regulations (or any successor regu-
19 lation).

20 (3) PROGRAM.—The term “Program” means
21 the Expanding Telehealth Program established
22 under subsection (a).

23 (4) TRANSITIONS OF CARE SERVICES.—The
24 term “transitions of care services” means the move-
25 ment of a patient from one setting of care to an-

- 1 other setting of care, including settings of care such
- 2 as hospitals, ambulatory primary care practices, am-
- 3 bulatory specialty care practices, long-term care fa-
- 4 cilities, home health, and rehabilitation facilities.

