



## TELEHEALTH MOMENTUM GROWS ON THE HILL

WASHINGTON, D.C. (June XX, 2017) - The Alliance for Home Dialysis applauds members of Congress for their continued effort to push for telehealth legislation.

Recently, Representatives Mike Thompson (D-CA), Gregg Harper (R-MS), Diane Black (R-TN), and Peter Welch (D-VT) introduced two pieces of bipartisan legislation to expand access to telehealth services under Medicare.

Both the **Medicare Telehealth Parity Act** and **CONNECT for Health Act of 2017** would take significant steps to expand telehealth that could have positive impacts on home dialysis patients. Not only do these bills authorize clinical assessments for home dialysis patients via telehealth in the home and facility, they also expand the list of providers eligible to provide telehealth services, remove geographic barriers to telehealth care, and expand the services eligible to be offered via telehealth.

Providing access to physicians and practitioners through telehealth may encourage more patients to adopt home dialysis as a treatment option. In addition, with this change, patients currently on home dialysis would no longer have to travel as frequently to a hospital or facility-qualifying site to interface with an approved practitioner, which can increase quality of life and facilitate employment options.

Patients who choose home dialysis have shown improved clinical outcomes, including reduced cardiovascular death and hospitalization, lower blood pressure, reduced use of antihypertensive agents, and reduced serum phosphorus. Studies have also shown that patients have better mental health outcomes, including social function, which is vitally important for overall well-being. While 11.2% of dialysis patients currently receive treatment in the home, the Government Accountability Office recently found that 15 to 25 percent of dialysis patients could benefit from home dialysis.

“As a practicing nephrologist, I have seen first-hand the benefits for patients when they dialyze at home,” says American Society of Nephrology President Eleanor Lederer, MD, FASN. “Facilitating access to home dialysis by expanding telehealth is a critical step in improving patient choice such that the patients, not the healthcare system, decide what is best for their health and quality of life. I thank the members of Congress for their leadership in introducing these two important pieces of legislation which will empower patients with kidney failure and improve outcomes.”

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**The Alliance for Home Dialysis** represents patients, clinicians, providers, and industry working to promote policies that facilitate treatment choice for individuals in need of dialysis, and to address systemic barriers that limit access to the many benefits of home dialysis. These issues are particularly important given the nearly half million Americans who are currently living with End

Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) and depend on dialysis for survival.