PENNSYLVANIA ACADEMY OF FAMILY PHYSICIANS

May 11, 2020

Commissioner Jessica Altman
Pennsylvania Insurance Department
Harrisburg, PA 17120

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Dear Commissioner Altman:

On behalf of the Pennsylvania Academy of Family Physicians (PAFP) and our more than 5,500 physician, resident and student members, thank you for your efforts to support health care providers during this unprecedented public health emergency.

Family physicians are not only on the frontlines of the COVID-19 pandemic, they are also continuing to treat patients for non-COVID-related ailments and chronic conditions while maintaining continuity of care through the use of telemedicine. Many patients, however, lack access to technology that would allow them to interact with their physicians via video conference, forcing physicians to administer care over the telephone.

Our family physician members have reported that Relative Value Units (RVUs) for audio-only patient interactions are only 35 to 50 percent of video interactions for the same work. Payment parity for audio-only telehealth interactions should be implemented within the state's medical assistance program, following guidelines set by CMS for Medicare. Additionally, we urge you to mandate that commercial health insurers follow suit and reimburse providers at the same rates for video and audio-only telehealth interactions.

Pennsylvania's family physicians are working hard to ensure that patients continue to receive the care they need during this difficult time. It's imperative that providers are fairly reimbursed for audio-only interactions, retroactive to the beginning of Gov. Wolf's COVID-19 emergency declaration.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Tracey Conti, MD
President
412-901-6240
contitd@upmc.edu

CC: Governor Tom Wolf
Secretary Rachel Levine, MD
Secretary Teresa Miller