



April 21, 2015

The Honorable Mike Thompson
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Gregg Harper
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representatives Thompson and Harper:

On behalf of the 70,000 clinical nurse specialists in the country, the National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists (NACNS) would like to express its strong support for your introduction of the ***Medicare Telehealth Parity Act of 2015***. This legislation introduces a phased-in expansion of telehealth coverage under Medicare as well as promotes maximum utilization of health providers for it allows eligible practitioners including clinical nurse specialists (CNSs) to provide care across state lines.

Telehealth offers patients the opportunity to be treated by a provider through the support of electronic information and telecommunications technologies. This innovative solution ensures access to care for patients across the country and is critical given the growing national demand for health providers and services. It is especially important in rural and underserved areas. Unfortunately, current federal statute limits the type of services and the eligible settings for patients to receive care through telehealth services. NACNS commends your inclusion of the provision in the bill that extends Medicare coverage to remote patient management services chronic health conditions. CNSs have distinguished themselves as effective coaches of those with chronic illness by promoting self-care and reducing the costs of illness. Several studies document CNS efforts in care of the chronically ill, including those with heart failure, asthma, chronic pulmonary disease and epilepsy. Mental health has been addressed numerous times in emergency departments that use telehealth for distance assessment.

The National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists applauds your leadership and looks forward to working with you to achieve passage of this important piece of legislation. If NACNS can be of any assistance, or if you have any questions, please contact Melinda Mercer Ray, NACNS executive director, at 703-929-8995 or via email at mray@nacns.org.

Sincerely yours,

Peggy Barksdale, MSN, RN, OCNS-C, CNS-BC
President