

SB 280 / HB 793: Telehealth

Establishes practice standards for social workers to use Telehealth in Florida.

What is the purpose of SB 280 / HB 793?

- ▶ The bill establishes practice standards for telehealth health care services, addresses and prescribes recordkeeping and patient consent.
- ▶ Explains telehealth is the delivery of health care services using telecommunication technologies, which allows licensed practitioners in one location to diagnose and treat patients at a different location.
- ▶ The bill will remove regulatory ambiguity regarding the provision of health care services using this technology because it is not currently addressed in Florida Statutes.

Why is SB 280 / HB 793 necessary?

- ▶ This bill establishes regulatory standards for the use of technology for health care practitioners which is currently not addressed under Florida law.
- ▶ Expanding the use of telehealth could help Florida address a significant health care provider shortage.
- ▶ Florida is experiencing a health care provider shortage evidenced by the fact that there are 647 federally designated Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSA) for primary care, dental care and mental health care and it would take an estimated 2,936 practitioners to eliminate these shortage areas in Florida.
- ▶ At the national level, an estimated 63% of practitioners use some type of telehealth platform to provide services. In contrast, only 6% of surveyed practitioners in Florida indicated they use telehealth for the provision of health care services.

How would SB 280 / HB 793 work?

- ▶ The standard of care for a telehealth provider is the same as that for an in-person health care provider. However, a telehealth provider is not required to research patient's medical history or conduct a physical examination if a patient evaluation conducted by telehealth is sufficient to diagnose and treat the patient.
- ▶ Licensed Clinical Social Workers (LCSW) are included as practitioners under this bill.
- ▶ The Department of Health, in coordination with the relevant boards, must develop and disseminate educational materials for telehealth licensees on using telehealth modalities to treat patients by January 1, 2019.

Vote YES on SB 280 / HB 793 to expand access to health care!