



December 14, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
Room H-305, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Room H-204, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Room S-230, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Room S-221, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

Re: Enactment of Telemedicine-focused TREAT Act in Next COVID-19 Supplemental or Continuing Resolution

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Minority Leader McCarthy, Majority Leader McConnell, and Minority Leader Schumer:

On behalf of the American Council on Education and the undersigned associations, we urge Congress to enact the “Temporary Reciprocity to Ensure Access to Treatment Act” (TREAT Act, S. 4421/H.R. 8283) on its own as soon as possible or as part of the next COVID-19 relief package or continuing resolution. The bipartisan, bicameral TREAT Act addresses an urgent COVID-19-related challenge—ensuring temporary reciprocity in the licensing of physical and mental health professionals to enable them to practice across state lines during the pandemic.

The COVID-19 pandemic has challenged the health care delivery system in unprecedented ways and the issue of inter-state licensing created significant barriers. The need for a short-term, uniform fix to address the licensing barriers to interstate care became clear early in the crisis. In response, some governors and most state legislatures issued executive orders and emergency declarations temporarily allowing to varying degrees limited license reciprocity with other states. As a result, telehealth, virtual health care via video or phone, quickly became a lifeline for college and university students during the pandemic as they returned to their homes, often far from their campus-based physical and mental health care providers. But the pandemic is understandably taking a toll on students, with a growing body of evidence showing increased anxiety and depression among young people as they struggle to navigate a college experience very different from the one they envisioned.

Unfortunately, the patchwork of state and local licensing laws that restrict the provision of care across state lines remains a significant barrier to timely access to vital physical and mental health care. The result is confusion and delay. Even in states that have emergency provisions, there continues to be variability in the types of out-of-state providers who may practice and the associated fees or administrative requirements, among issues.

Designed to respond to this ongoing challenge, the TREAT Act would create a **temporary** license reciprocity for all practitioners or professionals (those who treat both physical and mental health conditions) in all states for in-person or telehealth visits during a national emergency. Health care professionals would continue to practice within the scope of practice authorized by state and local authorities in the jurisdiction in which the provider holds a valid license. The TREAT Act would merely permit health care providers who hold a valid license in **good standing** in at least one state to practice in all other states for the duration of the emergency declaration. The TREAT Act is intended to apply **only** in situations of national or widespread emergencies triggered by presidential Stafford Act activation and the Secretary of Health and Human Services' declaration of a public health emergency. It does not apply in all disaster situations, especially in those affecting just one state or a specific region. Ultimately, under the bill, all state licensing practices will revert to normal at the conclusion of the national emergency, following a limited transition period.

Congress should step in to ensure that students and other individuals across the nation have access to the care they need, when they need it. Congress has broad authority to facilitate the deployment of vital resources nationwide during a public health emergency and now is the time to use that authority. This no-cost measure is a common-sense solution carefully tailored to meet a national crisis of this magnitude.

We thank you for your attention to this critical issue and are grateful for your leadership during these troubling times. With rates of COVID-19 transmission rising in every state, we cannot afford to delay action on this bipartisan, bicameral legislation. We look forward to working with you to ensure that the TREAT Act is enacted as soon as possible.

Sincerely,



Ted Mitchell
President

On behalf of:

ACPA- College Student Educators International
American Association of State Colleges and Universities
American College Health Association
American Council on Education
American Dental Education Association
American Indian Higher Education Consortium
Associated Colleges of the Midwest
Association for University and Counseling Center Directors
Association of American Colleges and Universities
Association of American Medical Colleges
Association of American Universities
Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities
Association of Chiropractic Colleges
Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges
Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities

Association of Independent Colleges and Universities in Massachusetts
Association of Independent Colleges and Universities in New Jersey
Association of Independent Colleges and Universities of Rhode Island
Association of Independent Colleges of Art & Design
Association of Independent Kentucky Colleges and Universities
Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities
Association of Presbyterian Colleges & Universities
Association of Private Colleges and Universities of Puerto Rico
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities
College and University Professional Association for Human Resources
Conference for Mercy Higher Education
Connecticut Conference of Independent Colleges
Consortium of Universities of the Washington Metropolitan Area
Council for Christian Colleges & Universities
Council for Higher Education Accreditation
Council of Independent Colleges
Council of Independent Colleges in Virginia
Council of Independent Nebraska Colleges Foundation
Council on Social Work Education
EDUCAUSE
Great Lakes Colleges Association
Higher Education Consultants Association
Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities
Independent Colleges of Indiana
Independent Colleges of Washington
Kansas Independent College Association
Louisiana Association of Independent Colleges and Universities
Maryland Independent College and University Association
NASPA- Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education
National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education
National Association of Colleges and Employers
National Association of College and University Business Officers
National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities
New York State Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities
North American Association of Methodist Schools, Colleges and Universities
North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities
Oregon Alliance of Independent Colleges and Universities
State Higher Education Executive Officers Association
Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities