



July 20, 2023

The Honorable Christina Henderson
Chair, Committee on Health
Council of the District of Columbia
The John A. Wilson Building, S. 402
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20004

RE: RHITES SUPPORT OF B25-125

Dear Chair Henderson and Members of the Committee on Health,

The Reproductive Telehealth Initiative for Telehealth Equity and Solutions, a fiscally sponsored project of the Hopewell Fund¹, (referred to as “RHITES” throughout), values the opportunity to comment on B25-125, the Uniform Telehealth Act of 2023, and write to express our support for this legislation that would promote health equity in Washington, D.C..

[RHITES](#) centers equity to bridge gaps in telehealth for reproductive health care through advancements in policy and partnerships. Equity in health care, or “health equity” is achieved when all people are able to reach their full health potential regardless of factors including race, class, gender, sexuality, ability, citizenship status, etc.²

We believe that the Uniform Telehealth Act will promote health equity in Washington, D.C. by expanding opportunities for D.C. residents to access critical telehealth services. Cross-state inconsistencies in telehealth laws create confusion for patients and serve as a barrier to equitable access to telehealth. By passing the Uniform Telehealth Act of 2023, health care providers, including advanced care practitioners, will be clear about their ability to provide care to D.C. based patients. It also provides a clear path for out-of-state providers to register in D.C. and provide care for patients. To achieve health equity, unnecessary barriers to patient choice for care should be eliminated and patients should be able to access the high-quality care that they need, regardless of where a provider is located.

As a delivery model, telehealth creates opportunities for health care when patients face barriers ranging from transportation access to scheduling conflicts.³ A wide range of reproductive health

¹ The Hopewell Fund is a 501(c)(3) public charity that specializes in helping donors, social entrepreneurs, and other changemakers quickly launch new, innovative social change projects. The Hopewell Fund provides fiscal sponsorship and project incubation services that enable donors to begin executing on their vision for social change without having to establish a new nonprofit. Hopewell also fiscally sponsors projects that exist as a legal entity and are ready to begin charitable work, but do not yet have nonprofit status.

² <https://www.rhites.org/about>

³ [Benefits of Telemedicine | Johns Hopkins Medicine.](#)



care services are provided via telehealth, including gender-affirming care⁴, hormonal contraception, medication abortions, and sexually transmitted infection (STI) care.⁵ At this critical time in reproductive health care, providing patients with as many high-quality delivery options for care, such as telehealth, is essential to preserve reproductive autonomy. For individuals seeking abortion care, studies have indicated high patient satisfaction, efficacy, and safety for reproductive health services provided by telehealth, including medication abortion.⁶ While D.C. has clinics providing in-person care, for some, travel to those areas of the District may pose a challenge or telehealth may be a preferred method. Expanding telehealth for out-of-state providers to care for D.C. patients opens opportunities to find as many options for care that are within budget. For those who are seeking prenatal care, Washington, D.C. is a maternal health desert.⁷ Telehealth options for prenatal care create options for those who may otherwise miss out of care due to situational barriers associated with in-person care.

RHITES supports B25-125, the Uniform Telehealth Act of 2023, as a step in the right direction to provide D.C. patients and providers, as well as out-of-state health care providers with the appropriate guidance for care. Please do not hesitate to let us know how we can be helpful to your efforts to advance telehealth policy, especially in regards to reproductive health care. If you have any questions or would like to discuss RHITES' perspective further, please contact us at info@rhites.org.

Sincerely,

Dana Northcraft, Founding Director, RHITES

Desireé Luckey, Policy Analyst, RHITES

⁴ [Telehealth for LGBTQ+ Patients](#)

⁵ [Telemedicine in Sexual and Reproductive Health | KFF](#)

⁶ [Patient satisfaction with telemedicine for medication abortion: Survey data from seven US states;](#)

⁷ [Mitigating Maternal Care Deserts | Optum](#)