1 August 2017

The 128th Legislature of the State of Maine
State House
Augusta, ME

Dear Honorable Members of the 128th Legislature:

Under the authority vested in me by Article IV, Part Third, Section 2 of the Constitution of the State of Maine, I am hereby vetoing LD 949, “An Act Regarding Telehealth.”

Technological advances in recent years have led to broader development of telehealth as an available tool for providing health care. Telehealth services have been found to be of particular value for a rural state like Maine, and we have seen rapid growth of telehealth services. Our existing telehealth policies are serving Mainers well.

This bill is a solution looking for a problem. Maine law now prohibits health insurance carriers from denying coverage for telehealth services if the service would be required to be provided in person. Coverage must be consistent with that provided for in-person services and consumers’ out-of-pocket costs (copayments, coinsurance and deductibles) cannot exceed those that would apply to inpatient services. The bill rephrases those requirements and adds several unnecessary and expansive clarifications.

In addition to these unnecessary provisions, the expansive nature of the clarifications pose the significant possibility of increased costs for insurers that will ultimately be felt by all health insurance ratepayers, including the State. It is impossible to truly determine the extent of additional costs that coverage of these services might create, but those increased costs will result in increased insurance premiums for already an overburdened healthcare system. Maine cannot afford to add yet another additional cost to health insurance coverage.

For these reasons, I return LD 949 unsigned and vetoed. I urge the legislature to sustain it.

Sincerely,

Paul R. LePage
Governor