April 27, 2021

The Honorable Brian Schatz  
United States Senate  
722 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Roger Wicker  
United States Senate  
555 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Ben Cardin  
United States Senate  
509 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Thune  
United States Senate  
511 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mark Warner  
United States Senate  
703 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Cindy Hyde-Smith  
United States Senate  
702 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Schatz, Senator Wicker, Senator Cardin, Senator Thune, Senator Warner, and Senator Hyde-Smith:

AARP, on behalf of our nearly 38 million members and all older Americans nationwide, thanks you for introducing the Creating Opportunities Now for Necessary and Effective Care Technologies (CONNECT) for Health Act of 2021. We share your commitment to expanding access to quality health care through telehealth services, and believe this bill addresses many barriers to care in Medicare.

AARP has long advocated for removing the originating site and geographic restrictions that prevent Medicare beneficiaries from being able to use technology to get care. Being able to see a health care provider while at home or another convenient facility improves safety, treatment adherence, and chronic disease management. It also allows greater opportunity for family caregivers to participate in the process. Particularly during the public health emergency, telehealth has become a literal lifeline for thousands of older Americans.

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced Medicare to quickly adapt to increased need for telehealth, often relying on waivers to allow for otherwise impermissible care. We appreciate that this bill also simplifies the waiver authority, clarifies the process by which new services can be added on either a temporary or permanent basis, and studies the utilization of telehealth services during the pandemic. Appropriate research and oversight will ensure that the health care services delivered via telehealth are of high quality and high value to consumers.
Again, thank you for your bipartisan leadership in addressing Medicare telehealth access. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me or have your staff contact Andrew Scholnick on our Government Affairs team at ascholnick@aarp.org or 202-434-3793.

Sincerely,

Bill Sweeney
Senior Vice President
Government Affairs