STATE OF CONNECTICUT

BY HIS EXCELLENCY

NED LAMONT

EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 7FF

PROTECTION OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND RESPONSE – EXPANSION OF TELEHEALTH AVAILABILITY

WHEREAS, on March 10, 2020, I issued a declaration of public health and civil preparedness emergencies, proclaiming a state of emergency throughout the State of Connecticut as a result of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) outbreak in the United States and confirmed spread in Connecticut; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to such declaration, I have issued thirty-two (32) executive orders to suspend or modify statutes and to take other actions necessary to protect public health and safety and to mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic; and

WHEREAS, COVID-19 is a respiratory disease that spreads easily from person to person and may result in serious illness or death; and

WHEREAS, the World Health Organization has declared the COVID-19 outbreak a pandemic; and

WHEREAS, the risk of severe illness and death from COVID-19 is higher for individuals who are 60 or older and for those who have chronic health conditions; and

WHEREAS, to reduce the spread of COVID-19, the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) recommend implementation of community mitigation strategies to increase containment of the virus and to slow transmission of the virus, including cancellation of gatherings of ten people or more and social distancing in smaller gatherings; and

WHEREAS, Executive Order No. 7DD, issued April 22, 2020, expanded, in part, the definition of "telehealth" in Section 19a-906(a)(11) to permit the use of audio-only telephone telehealth for providers that are in-network providers for commercial fully-insured health insurance providing telehealth services to include those patients without an existing provider-patient relationship; and

WHEREAS, existing restrictions on use of audio-only telehealth services may prevent certain Medicaid patients from accessing important healthcare services without in-person visits, and thereby increase the risk of transmission of COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, allowing Medicaid-enrolled providers to offer telehealth services using audio-only telephone for new or established patients who are Medicaid recipients will make more healthcare services available to more patients without increasing the risk of transmission of COVID-19;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, NED LAMONT, Governor of the State of Connecticut, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the State of Connecticut, do hereby **ORDER AND DIRECT:**

1. **Additional Flexibility for Medicaid-Enrolled Providers to Perform Telehealth Through Audio-Only Methods for New Patients.** Section 5 of Executive Order No. 7G, issued on March 19, 2020, Section 2 of Executive Order No. 7DD, issued on April 22, 2020, and Section 19a-906 of the Connecticut General Statutes and any associated regulations, rules and policies regarding the delivery of telehealth are further modified to expand the definition of "telehealth" in Section 19a-906(a)(11) to permit telehealth providers who are Medicaid-enrolled providers providing covered telehealth services to "new or established patients" who are Medicaid recipients to engage in telehealth through the use of audio-only telephone.

Unless otherwise specified herein, this order shall take effect immediately and remain in effect for the duration of the public health and civil preparedness emergency, unless earlier modified, extended or terminated.

Dated at Hartford, Connecticut, this 24th day of April, 2020.

Ned Lamont
Governor

By His Excellency's Command

Denise W. Merrill
Secretary of the State