



309 N. Washington Square, #110 | Lansing, MI 48933
1-866-227-7448 | Fax: 517-482-2794 | TTY: 1-877-434-7598
aarp.org.mi | miaarp@aarp.org | twitter: @aarpmichigan
facebook.com/aarp.michigan

March 3, 2021

Representative Bronna Kahle, Chair, *and*
Members of the House Health Policy Committee

Dear Chairwoman Kahle and Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to share our concerns regarding **HB 4356**, which would allow eye examinations and evaluations to be conducted through telemedicine under certain circumstances. With nearly 1.3 million members in Michigan, AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan 501(c)(4) organization that advocates on the issues that matter most to people age 50 and over, such as access to health care, financial security, and support for family caregivers.

AARP recognizes that telehealth offers promising opportunities - both now and in the future - to help people access health care in new ways. In recent years AARP Michigan advocated for the expansion of telemedicine to include file and send, to remove barriers to tele-mental health services, to include telehealth services as covered benefits for purposes of insurance, and to expand the definition of originating site to include a person's home. We continue to advocate for greater adoption of telehealth in other ways, such as by including nursing homes as an originating site, and expanding the definition of telehealth to include remote patient monitoring.

We appreciate the spirit in which this bill was introduced; however, AARP Michigan is opposed to HB 4356 at this time. Although technology continues to advance, we are concerned that when it comes to eye exams, the technology is not yet sufficient for optometrists to perform comprehensive eye and vision examinations over a virtual platform. We worry in particular about older adults who have chronic conditions such as hypertension and diabetes, both of which impact ocular health, or who may have symptoms of eye diseases such as macular degeneration. Telemedicine is not yet capable to allow for the types of important tests and assessments available when a patient receives an eye examination by a physician or optometrist in person.

If you have any questions or if there is further information we can provide, please feel free to contact our Associate State Director for Government Affairs, Melissa Seifert, at 517-316-6393 or mseifert@aarp.org. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Paula D. Cunningham
State Director

Lisa Dedden Cooper
Manager of Advocacy

Melissa Seifert
ASD/Government Affairs

Real Possibilities