Top Ten Reasons to Support HF 294

1. Both Medicare and Medicaid are paying 100 percent the same for telehealth as in-office visits and plan to continue to do so. Why shouldn’t private insurance companies do the same?

2. Because in Iowa the MHDS Regions are responsible for paying for core mental health services when no one else will, if private insurance won’t pay, the Regions will, meaning it will be paid from property taxes.

3. There are many mental health services that are difficult to find in Iowa. Telehealth provides access to these services, particularly in rural communities. Rather than spending most of a day traveling to and from an appointment, a farmer can visit with their provider from the tractor cab. That saves everyone time and money.

4. This bill is an important component of making Iowa’s mental health system work for Iowans. (See #2 above.)

5. This is not a telehealth parity bill. This is an access to mental health services bill – it only addresses mental health services.

6. Providers have seen a significant reduction in no-shows since being able to widely use telehealth. More Iowans are keeping their appointments and receiving the treatment they need.

7. Patient satisfaction scores are exceptionally high for telehealth mental health services – an indication of a quality service.

8. It does not make sense for a clinician to provide a service at a fraction of a rate for telehealth when they can receive the full rate for in-person. Without equal reimbursement for virtual mental health services, they will not be sustained.

9. There are no savings in providing mental health through telehealth. Most costs to provide a service come from salary, which is not reduced with telehealth. Remaining costs include location and technology. These costs exist with telehealth the same as in-person. Savings and efficiencies do not exist.

10. NAMI Iowa’s goal is for all Iowans to receive the help they need, when they need it. This bill will help make that happen.