### SB1022 Testimony template

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March 15, 2021

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Insurance and Real Estate Committee

Senator Mary Daugherty Abrams, Chair

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Senator Heather Somers, Ranking Member

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Public Health Committee

Connecticut General Assembly

Legislative Office Building

210 Capitol Avenue

Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Chairs, Co-Chairs, Ranking Members and Members of the Insurance and Real Estate and Public Health Committees:

My name is **(insert your name)**, and I am currently a **Licensed Marriage and family therapist (or LMFTA or MFT student)**, currently residing/practicing in **(insert your town or town you practice in)**. I am writing in support of SB1022, An Act Concerning Telehealth.

The virus and the declaration of the public health emergency declared by Governor Lamont last year has greatly altered the state’s mental health care system. Tele-health has become a very important tool for mental health providers throughout the pandemic. It has been used to continue to provide access to care for patients and engage new patients who have not received care in the past. It is anticipated that mental health needs will continue to increase in the wake of the public health crisis.

**As a provider, telehealth has allowed me to continue to see clients and provide much needed services to clients with increased needs throughout the pandemic. (Talk about why ongoing telehealth coverage is important to you and your clients here)**

SB 1022 affords private insurance market payment parity.Payment parity is an important component to telehealth legislation, as we as providers are still providing the same top quality care whether it be through telehealth or in-person services. Payment parity allows the clinical decision for location to be made between clients and therapists based on each clients unique needs, rather than a financial/coverage barrier.

SB 1022 also allows mental health providers to use their own selected platform in delivering telehealth services. Some insurance carriers require the use of a specific platform when seeking reimbursement for services. However myself, and others have already invested in various HIPAA compliant platforms and our patient population is as diverse as their insurance coverage and carrier. Requiring providers to use a carrier-specific platform places an undue burden. I ask that you allow providers to select their own platform that best meets their needs as well as the clients they are serving.

Thank you for your time and attention to these important matters. I support SB 1022 and urge you pass the bill out of your respective Committees. I also urge you to continue to include the payment parity provisions and allow the use of any HIPAA compliant platform selected by mental health providers in Connecticut as the proposal moves through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

**Your name, credentials**