



National Lieutenant Governors Association

Resolution In Support of Making Permanent the Waiver Changes Allowing Respiratory Care Therapists to Continue to Receive Virtual Respiratory Care Services

1 **WHEREAS**, respiratory therapists are nationally credentialed medical professionals who are trained and
2 educated in all aspects of pulmonary medicine and who specialize in providing pulmonary diagnostics,
3 treatment, and care to individuals with chronic respiratory conditions like chronic obstructive pulmonary
4 disease (COPD), asthma, pneumonia, and lung trauma and other respiratory-related diagnoses such as
5 influenza and COVID-19, and

6 **WHEREAS**, respiratory therapists are licensed in 49 states (Alaska is the exception), the District of
7 Columbia, Puerto Rico and Guam, having graduated from a nationally accredited education program and
8 passed an examination administered by the National Board of Respiratory Board, and

9 **WHEREAS**, respiratory therapists work in intensive care units, emergency departments, skilled nursing
10 and long-term care facilities, pulmonary function labs, sleep labs and clinics, educational settings, and the
11 patients' homes, and

12 **WHEREAS**, the need for respiratory therapists is expected to increase by more than 20% over the next 10
13 years according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, and

14 **WHEREAS**, the COVID-19 pandemic cemented the importance of respiratory therapists as essential
15 health care professionals for their dedication and endurance in saving lives, and

16 **WHEREAS**, temporary waivers permitted under the public health emergency (PHE) modified the
17 Medicare statute by recognizing the value and expertise of respiratory therapists to include them as
18 practitioners to provide virtual respiratory care services typically provided in the hospital outpatient
19 department or physician office to vulnerable Medicare beneficiaries in their homes, and

20 **WHEREAS**, enabling respiratory therapists to provide virtual services during the PHE has improved
21 patient adherence and outcomes, allowed for timely interventions, and removed access barriers for
22 vulnerable Medicare beneficiaries by eliminating the need for transportation or traveling long distances,
23 especially in rural and underserved areas, and

24 **WHEREAS**, individuals with chronic and acute respiratory conditions, including COVID-19, will no
25 longer have access to the virtual services and expertise of respiratory therapists when the PHE ends unless
26 Congress takes further action to make temporary waivers permanent, and



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30 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the National Lieutenant Governors Association supports
31 efforts to make permanent the waivers under the PHE that will allow eligible patients to continue to
32 receive virtual services provided by respiratory therapists in their home.

ADOPTED, this day, the 22nd of July, 2022.

Sponsors: Lt. Governor Garlin Gilchrist (D – Michigan), Lt. Governor Josh Green (D – Hawaii), Lt. Governor Denny Heck (D – Washington), Lt. Governor Sabina Matos (D – Rhode Island), Lt. Governor Billy Nungesser (R – Louisiana)