



# **Illinois launches telemedicine task force to improve health care access for rural residents**

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SPRINGFIELD – Lt. Governor Evelyn Sanguinetti joined IL Dept. of Healthcare & Family Services Director Felicia Norwood today to announce the formation of a new state task force to develop a comprehensive telemedicine strategy for the Medicaid program to help improve access to healthcare for Illinois residents in rural areas.

Co-chaired by Lt. Governor Sanguinetti, Director Norwood, and Medicaid Advisory Committee Chairman Howard Peters III, the Illinois Medicaid Telemedicine Task Force held its inaugural meeting Wednesday and immediately began identifying ways to expand the use of telemedicine in Illinois to assist the state in its goal of integrating physical and behavioral health services. The 18-member task force is comprised of health professionals and advocates from all areas of Illinois.

“Unfortunately, too many residents of our state go without needed access to health services because of where they live,” said Sanguinetti, who also chairs the Governor’s Rural Affairs Council. “The good news is that the use of telemedicine and other forms of virtual care – such as remote monitoring, online care, direct-to-consumer care, and the use of self-management apps – is increasing rapidly in Illinois as the need to solve health care disparities increases. It is our goal to expand telemedicine to deliver better care at a lower cost throughout Illinois.”

Norwood added, “Illinois Medicaid is committed to ensuring that all our members have access to quality healthcare, wherever they live. Through the use of today’s technologies, we are going to help our members connect to care more effectively than ever.”