FOR MORE INFORMATION:
NCQA: Andy Reynolds, (202)-955-3518
reynolds@ncqa.org

ATA: Gina Cella, (781) 799-3137
gcella@cellapr.com

ALLIANCE: Krista Drobac, (202) 415-3260
krista.drobac@connectwithcare.org

Taskforce on Telehealth Policy Begins Critical Conversations

Set to produce remote healthcare recommendations for policymakers in just 9 weeks

Twenty-three of the nation's leading healthcare experts gathered virtually last week, marking the first of several Taskforce on Telehealth Policy deliberations set to run through late August. Convened by the National Committee for Quality Assurance, Alliance for Connected Care, and the American Telemedicine Association (ATA), the Taskforce has just 9 weeks to formalize its recommendations for remote healthcare delivery nationwide.

The group – representing a broad spectrum of health plans, providers, consumer advocates and health quality experts from the public, private and non-profit sectors – is tasked with developing consensus recommendations for policymakers on how to maximize the benefits of telehealth services while maintaining high standards for care and healthcare delivery. At the Monday, June 29th kickoff meeting, members committed to creating collaborative solutions that place patient safety, healthcare quality, and clinical workability at the forefront.

"We need to get this moment in healthcare right by optimizing the quality and value of telehealth for everyone," said NCQA President Margaret (Peggy) O'Kane. "The fact that such an accomplished group of people are willing to dedicate their time, on short notice, to this task speaks to how high the stakes truly are."

The need for a comprehensive review of telehealth policy is underscored by recent data, with every element of healthcare experiencing major increases in telehealth and remote patient care. Many patients and providers have experienced the capabilities of telehealth for the first time and are interested in continuing to use it. Traditional (fee-for-service) Medicare has seen the number of remote visits increase from roughly 12,000 per week to over a million per week, according to recent comments from Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) Administrator Seema Verma. Many public and private payers, including CMS, have substantially relaxed telehealth restrictions during the pandemic.

"The value of telehealth during this emergency is undeniable, and the policy changes that were made by Congress and the Trump Administration were essential," said Alliance for Connected Care Executive Director Krista Drobac. "This taskforce can take what we have collectively learned in the past three months and develop thoughtful recommendations that will provide access to remote care for the long-term while balancing cost, quality and judicious use of taxpayer dollars."

"This Task Force on Telehealth Policy will help to maintain a strong, unified, and compelling voice needed to cement the gains we have made," added Ann Mond Johnson, CEO, the ATA. "Telehealth has played a vital role

in responding to the pandemic, driving a rapid transformation in how care is delivered. Working together, we must ensure access to care for all who need it, whenever they need it."

This week the Taskforce will move into breakout groups focused on three critical policy areas, which can be found here. Final recommendations will be issued in early September. A full list of Taskforce on Telehealth Policy Members is below:

Peter Antall, MD, Chief Medical Officer, Amwell

Regina Benjamin, MD, Chief Executive Officer, BayouClinic/Gulf States Health Policy Center, former Surgeon General of the United States

Kate Berry, Senior Vice President of Clinical Innovation, America's Health Insurance Plans

Sean Cavanaugh, Chief Administrative Officer, Aledade

Krista Drobac, Executive Director, Alliance for Connected Care

Yul Ejnes, MD, Clinical Associate Professor of Medicine, Brown University; Board of Regents Chair-Emeritus, American College of Physicians

Rebekah Gee, MD, Chief Executive Officer, Louisiana State University Health System

Nancy Gin, MD, Executive Vice President of Quality & Chief Quality Officer, Kaiser Permanente Federation

Kate Goodrich, MD, Senior Vice President Trend and Analytics, Humana

Chuck Ingoglia, President & Chief Executive Officer, National Council for Behavioral Health

Ann Mond Johnson, Chief Executive Officer, American Telemedicine Association

Megan Mahoney, MD, Chief of Staff, Stanford Health Care, Clinical Professor, Division of Primary Care and Population Health, Stanford University

Chris Meyer, Director of Virtual Care, Marshfield Clinic

Ricardo Munoz, MD, Chief, Division of Cardiac Critical Care Medicine, Executive Director, Telemedicine, Children's National Health System, Co-director, Children's National Heart Institute, Professor of Pediatrics, The George Washington University School of Medicine

Peggy O'Kane, President, National Committee for Quality Assurance

Kerry Palakanis, DNP, APRN, Executive Director, Connected Care Operations, Intermountain Healthcare

Michelle Schreiber, MD, Federal Liasion, Director, Quality Measurement & Value-Based Incentives Group, Center for Clinical Standards & Quality, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (non-voting)

Dorothy Siemon, JD, Senior Vice President for Policy Development, AARP

Julia Skapik, MD, MPH , Medical Director, Informatics, National Association of Community Health Centers

Jason Tibbels, MD, Chief Quality Officer, Teladoc Health

Nicholas Uehlecke, Federal Liaison, US Department of Health & Human Services (non-voting)

Andrew Watson, MD, Vice President, University of Pennsylvania Medical Center

Cynthia Zelis, MD, MBA, Chief Medical Officer, MD Live