

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

TODD STAPLES
COMMISSIONER



Sally Durocher
Texas Medical Board
P.O. Box 2018
Austin, Texas 78768

Dear Ms. Durocher:

I am writing to comment on the Texas Medical Board's (TMB) proposed telemedicine rules, published in the October 2, 2009 Texas Register. Specifically, I am concerned with the definition of "patient site presenters." The proposed changes prohibit medical professionals other than physicians, advance practice nurses and physician assistants from presenting a patient to the distant site physician. This definition excludes nurses and other allied health professionals from performing basic telemedicine functions. Many rural communities have limited or no access to physicians, advanced practice nurses or physician assistances and depend on other medical personnel for basic care.

Telemedicine increases access to health care in rural communities across our state. If this definition is adopted, it will reduce the use of telemedicine and limit its expansion. I urge the TMB to reevaluate the proposed rule with special consideration for the limited resources in rural medical offices and the growing need for telemedicine services.

I appreciate the opportunity to comment on this proposed rule.

Sincerely yours,

Todd Staples

TS/CWS/cws

