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## DIGEST

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HB 449 Reengrossed

2020 Regular Session

Echols

**Abstract:** Provides relative to behavioral health services delivered via telehealth and regulation of such services by the La. Department of Health.

Present law, the Louisiana Telehealth Access Act (R.S. 40:1223.1 et seq.), defines "telehealth", in pertinent part, as a mode of delivering healthcare services that utilizes information and communication technologies to enable the diagnosis, consultation, treatment, education, care management, and self-management of patients at a distance from healthcare providers. Proposed law amends this definition to provide that healthcare services delivered via telehealth include behavioral health services. Stipulates that, for purposes of proposed law, "behavioral health services" means those services as defined in present law that are appropriate for the patient and delivered by a licensed mental health professional, acting within the scope of applicable state laws and his professional license for services identified by the Louisiana Department of Health (LDH), to treat mental illness or substance use.

Present law, the Behavioral Health Services Provider Licensing Law (R.S. 40:2151 et seq.), authorizes the provision of behavioral health services in residential settings, clinic settings on an outpatient basis, and in home or community settings. Proposed law amends present law to authorize the provision of behavioral health services through telehealth. Stipulates that the provision of behavioral health services in any authorized setting shall be subject to rules and regulations of LDH.

Present law requires LDH to promulgate rules and regulations for behavioral health services providers. Proposed law provides that such rules and regulations shall address the delivery of behavioral health services by those providers through telehealth.

(Amends R.S. 40:1223.3(6) and 2153(1); Adds R.S. 40:2153(16) and 2156(B)(16))

### Summary of Amendments Adopted by House

#### The House Floor Amendments to the engrossed bill:

1. Stipulate that, for purposes of proposed law incorporating behavioral health services within the "telehealth" definition, the term "behavioral health services" means those services as defined in present law that are appropriate for the patient and delivered by a licensed mental health professional, acting within the scope of applicable state laws and his professional license for services identified by the La. Department of Health, to treat mental illness or substance use.

2. Amend the definition of "behavioral health services" in present law to include a reference to the provision of such services through telehealth.
3. Amend present law relative to settings in which behavioral health services may be provided to stipulate that the provision of such services in those settings shall be subject to rules and regulations of the La. Department of Health.
4. Make technical changes.