To amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to simplify payments for telehealth services furnished by Federally qualified health centers or rural health clinics under the Medicare program, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. SMITH of Nebraska introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on

A BILL

To amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to simplify payments for telehealth services furnished by Federally qualified health centers or rural health clinics under the Medicare program, and for other purposes.

1 Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

2 SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

3 This Act may be cited as the “Improving Telehealth for Underserved Communities Act of 2020”.

(Original Signature of Member)
SEC. 2. SIMPLIFYING PAYMENTS FOR TELEHEALTH SERVICES FURNISHED BY FEDERALLY QUALIFIED HEALTH CENTERS OR RURAL HEALTH CLINICS.

(a) In General.—Section 1834(m)(8)(B) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395m(m)(8)(B)) is amended to read as follows:

“(B) Payment.—The Secretary shall pay to a Federally qualified health center or rural health clinic serving as a distant site that furnishes a telehealth service to an eligible telehealth individual an amount equal to the amount that such Federally qualified health center or rural health clinic would have been paid under the payment methodology described in section 1834(o) or section 1833(a)(3), respectively, had such service been furnished without the use of a telecommunications system. Costs associated with the delivery of such services by a Federally-qualified health center or rural health clinic serving as a distant site pursuant to this paragraph shall be considered allowable costs for purposes of the payment methodologies described in the previous sentence.”.
(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall apply with respect to payments for telehealth services furnished on or after the first day of the emergency period described in section 1135(g)(1)(B) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1320b–5(g)(1)(B)).

SEC. 3. INCREASING LIMITS ON PAYMENT FOR RURAL HEALTH CLINIC SERVICES.

Section 1833(f) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395l(f)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by striking “, and” and inserting a semicolon;

(2) in paragraph (2)—

(A) by inserting “(before 2020)” after “subsequent year”; and

(B) by striking the period at the end and inserting a semicolon; and

(3) by adding at the end the following new paragraphs:

“(3) in 2020, at $92.03 per visit; and

“(4) in a subsequent year, at the limit established under this subsection for the previous year increased by the percentage increase in the MEI (as so defined) applicable to primary care services (as so defined) furnished as of the first day of that year.”.