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This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action. See *MCI v. FCC*, 515 F.2d 385 (D.C. Circ 1974).

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## **PRESS STATEMENT OF COMMISSIONER GLORIA TRISTANI ON DEDICATION OF MOBILE BREAST CARE CENTER**

Washington, DC – FCC Commissioner Gloria Tristani spoke today at the dedication of the Mobile Breast Care Center in Laurel, Maryland. The Center will deliver digital telemammography to Native American women in Indian country using a satellite provider to link the mobile mammography machine to doctors in Maryland.

Commissioner Tristani praised the Mobile Breast Care Center project, saying that “the satellite-based service that the Mobile Breast Care Center provides offers a creative solution to serve a population whose telecommunications and healthcare needs have been grossly underserved.”

Indian people have the poorest survival from cancer of any racial or ethnic group, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Breast cancer is the third leading cause of cancer deaths among Indians, and the second leading cause of cancer deaths for Indian women over the age of 55. These cancer mortality rates may be due to difficulties in accessing high-tech diagnostic and treatment options in rural areas.

The Mobile Breast Care Center combines the most advanced technology in breast cancer detection with onsite patient screening, diagnosis, and education. The Indian Health Service and tribal health care providers plan to use the Center at Tuba City, Arizona, a remote site on the Navajo Reservation. The Center is a key component of the Mobile Digital Telemammography Project that was initiated by the Department of Defense and the Department of Health and Human Services, and developed in association with The Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory.

In addition to using funds awarded by the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation, the group intends to apply for funds from the FCC’s Rural Health Care program to defray the cost of the communications link. The FCC created the Rural Health Care program in response to a congressional mandate that was part of the Telecommunications Act of 1996. One of the Universal Service programs, it ensures that health care providers serving rural communities pay no more than their urban counterparts for telecommunications services necessary for the provision of health care. Through the program, eligible rural health care providers receive discounts on monthly telecommunications charges, installation charges, and long distance Internet connection charges.