



NEWS

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See MCI v. FCC, 515 F 2d 385 (D.C. Circ 1974).

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FCC SEEKS COMMENT ON PROVIDING SPECTRUM FOR MEDICAL BODY AREA NETWORKS (ET Docket No. 08-59)

Washington, D.C. – The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) today adopted a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking that seeks comment on allocating spectrum and establishing service and technical rules for the operation of Medical Body Area Networks.

Medical Body Area Networks – or “MBANs” – could be used to create wireless body sensor networks around individual patients to monitor an array of physiological data – such as temperature, pulse, blood glucose level, blood pressure, respiratory function and a variety of other physiological metrics. MBAN systems would primarily be used in health care facilities, with the potential also of being used in other patient care/monitoring circumstances. Unlike traditional medical telemetry systems which rely on separate uncoordinated links for each physiological function being monitored, MBAN systems could serve to wirelessly monitor all of the desired data of a single patient, which could then be aggregated and wirelessly transmitted to a remote location for evaluation.

Using MBAN systems to eliminate much of the wired cables that typically connect patients to monitoring equipment and to facilitate the aggregation and transfer of physiological data will offer several clinical benefits – including improved patient mobility and comfort, reduced risks of infection, reduced clinical errors, and reduced patient monitoring costs.

The Notice seeks comment on options for accommodating MBAN operations in several frequency bands, and on the amount of spectrum that should be allocated for such use. More specifically, the Notice seeks comment on the feasibility of using the 2360-2400 MHz; 2300-2305 MHz and 2395-2400 MHz; the 2400-2483.5 MHz; or 5150-5250 MHz bands for this purpose, and on various licensing schemes that would be appropriate for any of these bands under consideration. In addition, the Notice seeks comment on tentative service and eligibility rules that would be similar in many respects to those for other wireless body-worn and implanted medical devices operating in the MedRadio Service in the 401-406 MHz bands.

Action by the Commission, June 29, 2009 by Notice of Proposed Rule Making (FCC 09-57). Acting Chairman Copps, Commissioners Adelstein and McDowell. Separate statement by Commissioner McDowell.

ET Docket No. 08-59.

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