



NEWS

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

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RURAL TELEMEDICINE PROGRAM FUNDS 16 MORE BROADBAND TELEHEALTH NETWORKS

\$145 Million Provided To Connect Hundreds of Hospitals in Seventeen States

Washington D.C. – The Federal Communications Commission’s Rural Health Care Pilot Program (Pilot Program) has funded the build-out of an additional 16 broadband telehealth networks that will link hundreds of hospitals regionally in Iowa, Louisiana, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New York, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia, and Wisconsin. Collectively, these 16 projects are eligible to receive up to \$145 million in reimbursement for the deployment, including engineering and construction, of their regional telehealth networks. The networks will provide critical, high-speed information links that can save lives and reduce the cost of health care in their rural communities. This funding announcement is in addition to six projects previously approved for up to \$46.2 million in funding, as announced by the FCC on April 16, 2009.

To help ensure the success of the networks in the Pilot Program, the FCC has also extended by one year a key project deadline for selecting a vendor, to June 30, 2011. Many of the projects in the Pilot Program have experienced delays due to coordination with potential American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding, or ongoing negotiations with vendors for network deployment. The extension provides additional time needed by participants to select vendors and seek funding commitments.

FCC Chairman Julius Genachowski said, “These health care networks will enable robust telemedicine services and provide high-speed highways for electronic medical records, saving lives by improving health care in rural America. They are an important step toward realizing our national commitment to bring the benefits of robust broadband to every corner of our country. I am pleased with the progress that the Pilot Program is making. At the same time, I understand certain projects need additional time and am happy the FCC can provide additional flexibility for the build-out of these critical health care networks.”

The FCC established the \$417 million Pilot Program to increase patient access to care via telemedicine and support the transfer of electronic medical records, which will improve the quality of care. Nationwide, 62 projects are eligible to receive Pilot Program funding for telehealth networks serving 6,000 health care facilities in 42 states and three U.S. territories, using broadband technology to bring state-of-the-art medical practices to isolated rural communities. Over one-third of the networks have received funding commitment letters. Another 21 projects have posted requests for proposals to select vendors to build out their broadband networks, but have not yet selected a vendor.

The following is an overview of the 16 projects announced today:

- **Geisinger Health System (Pennsylvania) (\$902 K)** – Fifteen health care providers will be connected to existing broadband network structures in Pennsylvania. The initiative will enable these providers to access and use high-speed Internet bandwidth connections to transfer radiographs and other medical information and to support electronic record systems.
- **Illinois Rural HealthNet Consortium (\$21.06 M)** – This statewide network will serve approximately 87 health care facilities. More than 95% of the connected locations will have connectivity at speeds ranging from 100 Mbps to 1 Gbps.
- **Iowa Rural Health Telecommunications Program (Iowa, Nebraska, South Dakota) (\$9.95 M)** – This project will support the creation of a new statewide broadband network that will link approximately 100 health care facilities in Iowa, Nebraska, and South Dakota at speeds of 1 Gbps.
- **Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals (\$15.9 million)** – This broadband network will link approximately 100 facilities, about 47 of which are rural, to government research institutions, enable patient access to medical specialists, and provide rapid and coordinated crisis response.
- **Michigan Public Health Institute (\$20.91 M)** – New network infrastructure will connect existing state health networks to each other and to Internet2 at speeds ranging from 1.5 to 100 Mbps. The network will link approximately 390 facilities in Michigan primarily in rural, underserved areas of the state.
- **Missouri Telehealth Network (\$2.38 M)** – This initiative will support the creation of a statewide dedicated telehealth broadband network for expanded telemedicine services, including high-definition video streaming capabilities. The network will support telehealth services for approximately 160 health care facilities throughout Missouri.
- **New England Telehealth Consortium (Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire) (\$24.69 M)** – A multi-state telehealth network will deliver remote trauma consultation and expansive telemedicine by linking approximately 500 primarily rural health care facilities – including hospitals, behavioral health sites, correctional facility clinics, and community health care centers – in Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine to urban hospitals and universities throughout New England.
- **North Country Telemedicine Project (New York) (\$1.99 M)** – Approximately 30 new health care facilities in a low-income, sparsely populated region of northern New York will be connected to an existing regional fiber ring and to Internet2, a dedicated nationwide backbone, at speeds ranging from 10 to 100 Mbps.
- **Northeast HealthNet (Pennsylvania, New York) (\$1.70 M)** – This broadband network will facilitate real-time information sharing among approximately 38 mostly rural health care facilities, and thousands of specialists in Pennsylvania and New York State, to provide remote diagnosis, treatment, and monitoring of patients with chronic and acute medical conditions.
- **Northeast Ohio Regional Health Information Organization (\$11.29 M)** – This project will expand an existing network to connect approximately 19 medical facilities in 22 counties at

speeds ranging from 100 Mbps for sites connected via wireless and 1 Gbps for sites connected with fiber.

- **Northwestern Pennsylvania Telemedicine Initiative (\$352 K)** – This project will improve access to a broad range of specialty medical services at five facilities, two of which are prisons. Its goals include using telemedicine to encourage medical professionals to establish services and remain in rural communities.
- **Oregon Health Network (\$20.18 M)** – This project will support the creation of a comprehensive and robust broadband telehealth network that will connect hospitals, clinics, and community colleges throughout Oregon. The network will support highly efficient broadband services for health care facilities and providers to share electronic health records, radiological images, video, and prescriptions, among other data sets.
- **Pennsylvania Mountains Healthcare Alliance (\$4.49 M)** – A new broadband network of approximately 12 hospitals in rural western Pennsylvania will provide a variety of telehealth services, specialty care, and telepharmacy in 18 counties. The network will provide a minimum of 10 Mbps service and connect with Internet2. The project previously merged with the Juniata Valley Network project, a network in the rural region of the Appalachian Mountains that will connect approximately 79 health care facilities to enable telemedicine and school wellness programs, and will connect to Internet2 at speeds ranging from 7 to 100 Mbps.
- **Sanford Health Collaboration and Communication Channel (South Dakota, Iowa, Minnesota) (\$813 K)** – This project will link seven existing networks at speeds of up to 100 Mbps to access administrative services and connect with educational institutions. Facilities served include the Aberdeen, S.D. area Indian Health Services.
- **St. Joseph's Hospital (Wisconsin) (\$655 K)** – This project will link two existing fiber systems in the City of Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin, to St. Joseph's Hospital and two local community health clinics in order to more fully support telehealth services.
- **West Virginia Telehealth Alliance (West Virginia, Virginia, Ohio) (\$8.4 M)** – This statewide network will connect approximately 450 facilities in West Virginia, improving connectivity for rural health centers. The project is focused on regions of the state with historically high concentrations of poor and elderly individuals suffering from chronic medical conditions.

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