



NEWS

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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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FCC TAKES STEPS TO INTRODUCE NEW ADVANCED MEDICAL TECHNOLOGIES TO TREAT NEUROMUSCULAR DISORDERS AND TRAUMATIC INJURIES

Action empowers broadband and health IT to transform health care for patients

Washington, D.C.—The Federal Communications Commission today advanced its mobile broadband agenda by adopting rules that will enable a new generation of wireless medical devices that could be used to restore functions to paralyzed limbs. Medical Micropower Networks (MMNs) are ultra-low power wideband networks consisting of multiple transmitters implanted in the body that use electric currents to activate and monitor nerves and muscles.

The 2010 *National Broadband Plan* observed that the use of spectrum-agile radios and other techniques can significantly increase the efficient use of radio spectrum to meet growing demand for this valuable resource. MMNs illustrate how advanced technology can enable the more efficient use of spectrum to deliver innovative new services.

Each year, millions of Americans suffer from spinal cord injuries, traumatic brain injuries, strokes, and various neuromusculoskeletal disorders. MMNs can provide effective therapy for these debilitating conditions by taking the place of damaged nerves to restore sensation, mobility, and other functions to limbs and other parts of the body. As the FCC also recognized in the 2010 *National Broadband Plan*, wireless technology can improve the quality of life for individuals and lower the cost of health care. Today's action advances this broadband health care agenda.

The FCC initiated this proceeding in response to a petition from the Alfred Mann Foundation, which has built prototype MMN systems and conducted extensive testing that demonstrates that this new medical technology can reliably operate in shared spectrum to deliver vital therapies. The action the FCC takes today will allow devices such as those being tested by Alfred Mann to proceed on the path to patient use as well as inspire researchers to begin work on the next generation of implanted medical radio networks.

Action by the Commission on November 30, 2011 by Report and Order (FCC 11-176). Chairman Genachowski, Commissioners Copps, McDowell, and Clyburn. Separate statements issued by Chairman Genachowski, Commissioners Copps, McDowell, and Clyburn.

ET Docket No. 09-36.

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