

## **FCC Consumer Advisory Committee**

### **Draft Recommendation Regarding the Mobile Health Task Force**

Whereas, in 2010, the Federal Communication Commission issued a National Broadband Plan that identified health care as an area of enormous promise for broadband-enabled innovation. In 2012, a mHealth Task Force was mobilized, bringing together academic, industry, and government leaders, to research the barriers to rapid deployment of mHealth technology and to develop recommendations to government and industry to overcome barriers to the adoption of wireless health technologies.

Whereas, interest in and use of mHealth is growing. It is estimated that by 2020, “at least 160 million Americans will be monitored and treated remotely for at least one chronic condition” according to Nerac, a Connecticut research firm. mHealth can allow seniors to live independently and spend more time at home, instead of more expensive hospital stays, while reducing the costs of medical care by 25% as fewer face to-face consultations are needed.<sup>i</sup> And, 77 percent of Americans said they would like to receive email reminders for doctor’s visits, 75 percent would prefer to schedule a doctor’s visit online, and 74 percent would like to be able to email directly with their doctor.<sup>ii</sup>

Whereas, FCC Chairman Genachowski has announced that the FCC plans to act on recommendations from the mHealth Task Force report, including that the Commission would collaborate with its federal partners and the private sector to meet the mHealth Task Force’s goal that mHealth technology be a routine medical best practice within five years. And, the Commission also plans to hire a permanent FCC Health Care Director, to function as the central point of contact to external groups on all health-related issues.

Whereas, the needs of people with disabilities and other under-served groups are not specifically addressed in the Task Force recommendations or in the stated FCC plans.

Be It Resolved, that the Consumer Advisory Committee calls upon the Federal Communications Commission to ensure that the needs of people with disabilities, low-income individuals and other under-served groups be included in the mHealth Task Force efforts and that the Commission take steps to ensure the interests of underserved populations are addressed in the evaluation and resulting recommendations to address the issues of affordable connectivity and compatibility for telehealth devices, including accessibility for people with disabilities.

Be It Further resolved, that the CAC encourages the Commission to ensure that the Healthcare Director and other health-related FCC staff are made aware of the specific needs of underserved populations, including the access needs of individuals with disabilities. And, the CAC urges the Commission to work closely with other federal agencies including the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the Office of the National Coordinator (ONC), and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to accelerate their ongoing collaboration and ensure that the needs of underserved individuals are being addressed through the coordinated activities.

Committee Action: Adopted Unanimously, November 2, 2012

Respectfully submitted:  
Debra R. Berlyn, Chairperson  
FCC Consumer Advisory Committee

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<sup>i</sup> *Socio-Economic Impact of mHealth*, Apr. 2012: <http://telenor.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/BCG-Telenor-Mobile-Health-Report-May-2012.pdf>.

<sup>ii</sup> Darrel West, *Overcoming Rural Health Care Barriers through Innovative Wireless Health Technologies*, June 24, 2010: <http://www.brookings.edu/research/testimony/2010/06/24-health-it-west>.