



Federal  
Communications  
Commission

# Recent FCC Actions to Advance Health Technology

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# The Promise of Broadband-Enabled Health Technology

## Expanding connectivity for health technology can:

- **Increase access to health care** and medical expertise, especially in hard to serve areas
  - Telemedicine and video conferencing allow rural health care providers to take advantage of specialists, training, and resources in urban centers
- **Improve patient care** by utilizing data to improve health care strategies
  - Patients who used a mobile tracking system for diabetes care received regular, tailored self-care messages and were able to achieve significant reduction in blood sugar levels over a year long study
- **Reduce health care costs** by using information to improve efficiency of care delivery
  - Telehealth can reduce the costs of medical care among the elderly by 25%, because it reduces the number of face to-face consultations needed
  - Costs related to data collection can be reduced by allowing patients and doctors to access health records remotely, increase efficiency, avoid duplication, and save between 20% and 30% in administrative costs

## FCC Areas of Responsibility

- **Rural Health Care Program:** Supports broadband for health care providers, which promotes telemedicine adoption to expand patient access to specialists and drive down costs.
- **Broadband:** Advances both wireline and wireless communications services and technologies, thus enabling many medical and medical-associated applications.
- **Spectrum:** Provides access to the airwaves for wireless medical devices and various radio services that support Health IT applications, while preventing harmful interference.
- **National Broadband Plan:** Engages in a variety of actions and activities to facilitate Health IT under NBP recommendations.

## Federal Interagency Cooperation

- In 2010, FCC and FDA entered into an unprecedented partnership:
  - Working together to ensure that communications-related medical innovations can swiftly and safely be brought to market
  - Formally signed MOU & held joint public workshop
- FDA Safety and Innovation Act (FDASIA) (Public Law 112-144):
  - FDA, FCC and ONC (Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology) are tasked with creating a report proposing strategy and recommendations for an appropriate risk-based regulatory framework for Health IT
- Coordination with NTIA & IRAC on spectrum issues.
- Participation in NIH Wireless Medical Technologies Working Group.
- Coordination with HHS, NTIA, and RUS on rural health care reform.

# New Healthcare Connect Fund

- In December 2012, the Commission reformed and streamlined the health care universal service support program, creating a new, efficient Healthcare Connect Fund.
- Healthcare Connect will expand health care provider access to broadband, especially in rural areas, and encourage the creation of state and regional broadband health care networks.
- Healthcare Connect builds on success of Pilot Program networks:
  - Large medical centers shared expertise with rural providers.
  - Telemedicine and electronic health record exchange improved quality and reduced cost of care.





# Telemedicine Demonstration

## ■ What is telemedicine?

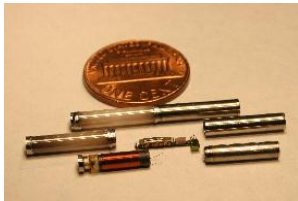
- Telemedicine and telehealth applications improve the quality of health care delivered to patients, generate savings in the cost of providing health care, and reduce the time and expense associated with travel to distant locations to receive or provide care.

## ■ Telemedicine Demo at 1pm

- Georgia Telehealth Partnership
  - Paula Guy, Chief Executive Officer of the Georgia Partnership for Telehealth
  - Focuses on increasing access to health care through innovative use of technology including telemedicine, health information exchange and telehealth.
- Bacon County Health Services, FCC Pilot Project



## Other Recent FCC Actions



- **Medical Device Radiocommunications Service (MedRadio), March 2009:** New service by expanding previous provisions for medical implant communications service.
- **Medical Micropower Networks (MMNs), November 2011:** Adopted rules to enable a new generation of wireless medical devices that can be used to restore functions to paralyzed limbs. MMNs are ultra-low power wideband networks consisting of transmitters implanted in the body that take the place of damaged nerves, restoring sensation and mobility.

## Other Recent FCC Actions

- **Retinal Implants, November 2011:** OET granted a waiver to Second Sight Medical Products, Inc. of Section 15.209(a) of the Commission's rules to allow it to obtain FCC certification for and market its Argus II Retinal Prosthesis System which is a medical implant system designed to treat profoundly blind people.
- **Medical Body Area Networks (MBANs), May 2012:** Order to allocate spectrum for Medical Body Area Networks, making the U.S. the first country in the world to make spectrum available for this specific usage. MBANs are networks of wireless sensors which transmit data on a patient's vital health indicators to their doctor or hospital.
- **Experimental Licensing Order, January 2013:** Order to promote expanded opportunities for radio experimentation and market trials, including for medical devices
- **Spectrum for Wireless Broadband:** Focused on providing additional spectrum for commercial wireless broadband networks. Accommodates innovation and growth in mHealth devices and applications.





## mHealth Task Force

- Task Force sparked via FCC held mHealth Summit (June 2012) bringing together academia, industry, and government to accelerate adoption of wireless health technologies.
  - Participants included senior executives and leaders from health technology companies, including established companies, startups, non-profits, hospital leaders, and government experts from the FCC, FDA, HHS, VA, CMS, and NIH.
  - The Co-chairs of this working group were Julian Goldman from Partners HealthCare, Robert Jarrin from Qualcomm, and Douglas Trauner from Health Analytic Services.
- In September 2012, the mHealth Task Force released its report and recommendations to the public.
  - The Report set the following five year goal: **For mHealth technology to become a routine medical best practice within five years.**

# mHealth Task Force

- In just four months, the FCC has taken action on 85% of the mHealth Task Force recommendations, including:
  - Enable wireless test beds
  - Create the Health Care Connect Fund
  - Broadband Adoption Lifeline Pilot
  - Promote international spectrum usage for MBANs
  - Enhance FCC coordination with CMS
  - Begin hiring process for a permanent Director of Health Care Initiatives
  - Improve interagency alignment, data sharing, and cooperation
  - Launch [FCC.gov/health](http://FCC.gov/health)

