

**STATEMENT OF
CHAIRMAN JULIUS GENACHOWSKI**

Re: *Expanding Broadband Access and Spectrum Availability for Healthcare*

Like today's first item, this presentation reminds us of the power of broadband as a platform for innovation in one of the largest sectors of our economy – health care. Broadband and other wireless technologies are improving the quality of medical care, while lowering costs.

Earlier this month, I visited the Oakland Children's Hospital & Research Center and announced that up to \$400 million in annual funding will be made available to healthcare providers as part of the FCC's new Healthcare Connect Fund. This program will enable the creation of broadband networks to support telemedicine, opening up a world of possibility and new opportunities for rural clinics, such as accessing the resources and specialists at urban medical centers or providing instant access to electronic health records.

More high-speed connectivity will fundamentally transform health care in America, whether mobile, fixed wireless, or wireline. New innovative applications are being created to allow doctors to administer better care, give patients more mobility and independence, and reduce administrative costs across the health care system. Moreover, with health care costs adding up to almost 18 percent of the country's GDP, wireless technology has the power to disrupt this sector and catalyze tremendous economic growth.

Today, we're seeing new types of tiny microsensors that continuously transmit vital patient information back to his or her physician. An ingestible microsensor the size of a grain of sand can send a signal via a patient's mobile phone to ensure that the patient is taking their regular medication.

Telemedicine is offering new ways for doctors to leverage resources and specialists that are located many miles away, as we will soon have a chance to witness in the telemedicine demonstration with the FCC Pilot project clinic in Bacon County, Georgia.

As you have just heard, the FCC has worked to support wireless and wireline connectivity for health for many years, including the original Rural Health Care Program created out of the Universal Service Fund in 1997, and our Office of Engineering and Technology's ongoing work to expand spectrum access for wireless medical devices.

Since then, the National Broadband Plan set forth several recommendations on how we could act to accelerate adoption of health technology. I am proud of the work that the agency has done to expand our health programs over the last four years, including creation of a new Healthcare Connect Fund, entering into an unprecedented partnership with the FDA, and engaging the private sector through the mHealth Summit and Task Force.

I also want to recognize the leadership of Secretary Sebelius at HHS, Peggy Hamburg from FDA, and the innovative work being conducted by federal agencies such as the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation, and the National Institutes of Health, to test out new payment options and ways to serve our most vulnerable populations with health IT, and their efforts to evaluate and create shared data around new health technology advances.

However, there is still much that we can do to ensure that these technologies are safe and able to work harmoniously in a hospital setting. With so many new devices available, a small health care provider may not have access to the best information about what works and doesn't work for their facility.

The Order we just approved reforms the experimental licensing program here at the FCC, and creates the possibility for a testbed for wireless medical devices. Our Office of Engineering and Technology, led by Julius Knapp, will begin the process of reaching out to our federal agency partners as well as the private sector with the goal of creating testbeds that are specifically designed to advance the development and deployment of wireless technology for health care applications.

With the May 2012 order on Medical Body Area Networks, America became the first country in the world to allocate spectrum for this purpose. We must continue to lead the world in health technology innovation. Today's order is one great step toward encouraging thorough testing and evaluation, creating networks of health care providers, and increasing information sharing.

Many thanks to the terrific team from the Georgia Telehealth Partnership and Coffee Regional Medical Center for joining us today – both in person and via the excellent telehealth video demonstration.

Thank you to Julius Knapp and Linda Oliver for your outstanding leadership on these issues, and to the Wireline Competition Bureau and Office of Engineering and Technology.