



NEWS

Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, D. C. 20554

News Media Information 202 / 418-0500
Internet: <http://www.fcc.gov>
TTY: 1-888-835-5322

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).

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
January 31, 2013

NEWS MEDIA CONTACT:
Louis Peraertz, (202) 418-2100
Louis.Peraertz@fcc.gov

**STATEMENT BY FCC COMMISSIONER MIGNON L. CLYBURN
ON FCC STAFF PRESENTATION TO EXPAND BROADBAND ACCESS
AND SPECTRUM AVAILABILITY FOR HEALTH CARE**

“One of the most important lessons I learned from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, and the 2010 National Broadband Plan, is that if we are to ever realize the maximum benefits of broadband technologies, then government agencies, industry, and the private sector must be willing to collaborate and innovate in novel ways.

“This need is most acute in those key policy areas where our Nation must improve in order to stay competitive. I do not believe it was arbitrary that health care led the list in this section of the plan. According to some reports, the U.S. ranks as low as 37th in the world for health care system performance, but spends more on healthcare per capita than any other Nation.

“This presentation and other reports make it clear to me that access to high capacity wired and wireless telecommunications services can play an important role in shifting these rankings by improving patient outcomes, and reducing health care delivery costs. When the Department of Veterans Affairs implemented a national home telehealth program, it found that this coordination in patient care demonstrated a 25% reduction in the number of days of bed care and a 19% reduction in hospital admissions. TeleNor, a mobile telecommunications provider, estimated that mHealth can reduce the costs of medical care for the elderly by 25% by reducing the number of face to-face consultations needed and allowing seniors to live independently.

“Therefore, I commend the Chairman for directing the Commission staff to expedite rulemaking proceedings that will enable the health care industry, to take greater advantage, of the recent innovations in communications services. Wireless Medical Micropower Networks could help restore functions to paralyzed limbs. MBANs -- those networks of wireless sensors -- often no bigger than a Band-Aid, can transmit vital data to a patient’s doctor or hospital and thereby allow more patients to be monitored. And in December of last year, the Order to implement the Rural Health Care Connect Fund was monumental. The Fund expands health care providers’ access to broadband, especially in rural areas, and encourages the creation of state and regional broadband health care networks. By providing a substantial, 65 percent discount for both services and infrastructure, the Fund promotes health care provider participation in the program. It also authorizes a new pilot program for skilled nursing facilities, which promises to offer optimal care to patients, who are too sick to stay at home but not ill enough for hospitalization.

“But, as the Chairman has made clear in numerous statements about the mHealth Task Force, the Commission needs to do more. We must also focus our resources on creative approaches, such as new collaborations between federal agencies and across relevant industries to spur even greater improvements in healthcare.

“I thank Rebecca Hanson, Julie Knapp, and Linda Oliver for the presentation and for taking the time to brief me on the staff’s future plans to promote broadband and spectrum access for healthcare services.”

--FCC--