



NEWS

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See MCI v. FCC, 515 F 2d 385 (D.C. Circ 1974).

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STATEMENT OF COMMISSIONER AJIT PAI ON HEALTH CARE TECHNOLOGY PRESENTATION

This afternoon, I look forward to attending the telemedicine demonstration that will be held in this room. It will include a simulated patient examination with the Coffee Regional Medical Center in Bacon County, Georgia, which is a participant in the Rural Health Care Pilot Program.

The Pilot Program, which was established in 2006, has been a tremendous success. According to an evaluation done by the Wireline Competition Bureau last year, the Pilot Program has “result[ed] in improved quality and lower costs of health care in rural areas.” To give just a couple of examples, one Pilot Program participant in Pennsylvania has reported that it is now able to provide tele-stroke services for neurology patients within minutes, as opposed to hours—potentially a life-saving difference for stroke victims. And in South Dakota, another Pilot Program participant has told us that its Electronic Intensive Care Unit program has substantially reduced the average number of days that a patient must stay in the ICU.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone at the FCC who worked so hard in creating and implementing the Pilot Program. I am also pleased that we voted last month to establish the Healthcare Connect Fund, building on the lessons learned from the Pilot Program. I am confident that in the years to come, we will see measurable improvements in patient care across rural America, thanks to the Fund.

Of course, progress in this field isn’t limited to the wireline side of the ledger. Turning to the area of mobile health, we in the federal government should encourage such innovation, not stand in the way. Last month, for example, the Food and Drug Administration approved an application developed by AliveCor that can turn your iPhone into an electrocardiogram; you can even download it from iTunes. This is certainly good news, but it is worth noting that the application was made available for veterinary use months earlier. It goes without saying that safety is always a priority. But our goal should be for humans to benefit from potentially life-saving innovation no later than their pets.

For the innovation in telehealth is improving our lives so markedly that innovations sometimes seem like the stuff of science fiction. For example, Qualcomm is currently sponsoring a \$10 million competition to stimulate the development of a Tricorder, a mobile health device that should be familiar to all Trekkies out there. This device would be capable of capturing key health metrics and diagnosing a set of fifteen diseases. This competition has been

endorsed by all five captains from the various *Star Trek* television series, and I look forward to seeing the devices that are produced.