



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

August 3, 2018

The Honorable Jeff Merkley
United States Senate
313 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Merkley:

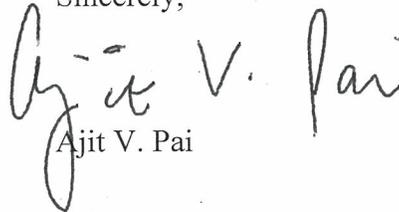
Thank you for your letter expressing support for the Commission's efforts to strengthen the Rural Health Care (RHC) Program and improve access to telehealth in rural America. As the son of two doctors in rural Kansas, I understand the critical role that broadband plays in providing patients in rural areas with high-quality health care services. And as Chairman, I've seen the potential of telemedicine firsthand, from a Veterans Affairs facility in rural Lecanto, Florida to Hermiston, Oregon, where local health care providers are making a real impact on rural communities.

I am pleased to share with you that the Commission adopted a Report and Order on June 25, 2018, which takes immediate action to increase funding for rural hospitals and health clinics by 43%, or \$171 million per year. This increase—along with future inflation adjustments and a mechanism to carry forward unused funding from previous years—will help ensure that rural health care providers get the connectivity they need to better serve patients for years to come.

In addition, we must always ensure that scarce federal funds are being well spent. That's why Commission staff are taking a hard look at eliminating any waste, fraud, and abuse within the RHC program. After all, every dollar misspent by an unscrupulous service provider is a dollar that can't offset the costs that doctors and nurses incur serving some of the most vulnerable patients in America. I look forward to working with my colleagues to continue these efforts later this year.

I appreciate your continued interest in this matter. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ajit V. Pai". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "A".
Ajit V. Pai



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

August 3, 2018

The Honorable Ron Wyden
United States Senate
221 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Wyden:

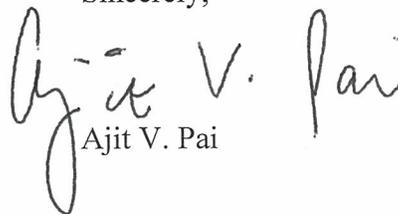
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