



OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

December 3, 2018

The Honorable Dan Sullivan  
United States Senate  
702 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

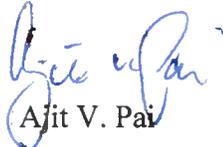
Dear Senator Sullivan:

Thank you for your letter about the Rural Health Care Program and its important role in Alaska. 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 during my time at the Commission, I've seen the potential of telemedicine firsthand, especially for those living in Alaska Native villages where the nearest hospital is only accessible by plane or helicopter.

I share your views on the Rural Health Care Program's importance for patients in Alaska and throughout rural America, and I too want to ensure that it works for health care providers, service providers, and taxpayers alike. To that end, I am happy to commit to the three steps you and I discussed during our November 15, 2018 meeting. *First*, I plan to move forward with an order adopting new rules for the Rural Health Care Program in 2019, with a target of doing so in the first half of the year. To aid that work, I have asked staff to immediately release a public notice to refresh the record, so that the Commission can learn from the lessons of recent months. *Second*, I have asked staff to draft a Public Notice (to be released in January 2019) that reminds participants of the rules of the program, including how to calculate rural rates and the protections for rural health care providers participating in the program. And *third*, the review of requests from Rural Health Care Program participants seeking relief before the Commission will be as expeditious as possible given staff resources.

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

Sincerely,

  
Ajit V. Pai

Senator, thanks again for taking the time to meet recently, and it was a pleasure meeting your wife as well. In addition to this issue, please let me know if we can be of assistance with respect to communications networks damaged during the recent earthquake in Anchorage.



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THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

December 3, 2018

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski  
United States Senate  
522 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Murkowski:

Thank you for your letter about the Rural Health Care Program and its important role in Alaska. 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 during my time at the Commission, I've seen the potential of telemedicine firsthand, especially for those living in Alaska Native villages where the nearest hospital is only accessible by plane or helicopter.

I share your views on the Rural Health Care Program's importance for patients in Alaska and throughout rural America, and I too want to ensure that it works for health care providers, service providers, and taxpayers alike. To that end, I am happy to commit to the three steps Senator Sullivan and I discussed during our November 15, 2018 meeting. *First*, I plan to move forward with an order adopting new rules for the Rural Health Care Program in 2019, with a target of doing so in the first half of the year. To aid that work, I have asked staff to immediately release a public notice to refresh the record, so that the Commission can learn from the lessons of recent months. *Second*, I have asked staff to draft a Public Notice (to be released in January 2019) that reminds participants of the rules of the program, including how to calculate rural rates and the protections for rural health care providers participating in the program. And *third*, the review of requests from Rural Health Care Program participants seeking relief before the Commission will be as expeditious as possible given staff resources.

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ajit V. Pai".

Ajit V. Pai