



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

October 15, 2019

The Honorable Angus King
United States Senate
133 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator King:

Thank you for your letter regarding 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.

The RHC Program helps health care providers afford the connectivity that they need to better serve patients. We have taken several steps to extend the program's impact to those who may not otherwise have access to high-quality health care. For instance, we adopted the first increase to the program's budget in a generation. Specifically, in a June 2018 Order, the Commission increased the annual RHC Program funding cap by 43%, to \$571 million, starting with FY 2017; adjusted the RHC Program funding cap for inflation, starting in FY 2018; and established a process to carry-forward unused funds from past funding years for use in future funding years. Thanks to these measures, all supported services provided to rural health care providers in the Rural Health Care Program in FY 2018 were fully funded.

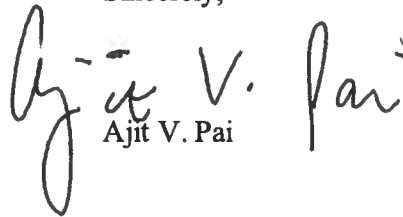
In addition, we must always ensure that scarce federal funds are being well spent. After all, every dollar misspent by an unscrupulous service provider is a dollar not devoted to telemedicine and the patients who need it. That's why, in order to promote the efficient distribution of limited RHC Program funds, and increase transparency and predictability for Program participants, the Commission adopted a Report and Order at the FCC's August Open Meeting which reformed RHC Program rules. The Report and Order (1) reformed the distribution of RHC funding to promote efficiency and changed aspects of the Telecommunications Program that encourage waste, fraud, and abuse; (2) streamlined and simplified the calculations of the discounted rates that health care providers pay for communications services and the amount of support received from the program; (3) directed the Program Administrator to create a database of rates that health care providers could use to quickly and easily determine the amount of support they can receive from the Program; (4) targeted funding to the most rural areas and those facing shortages of health care providers and ensured that eligible rural health care providers continue to benefit from program funding in the event that demand for the Program exceeds its funding cap; (5) simplified the application process for Program participants and provided more clarity regarding Program procedures; and (6) directed the Program Administrator to take a variety of actions to increase transparency in the

Page 2—The Honorable Angus King

Program and ensure that all applicants receive complete and timely information to help inform their decisions regarding eligible services and purchases. The Commission is confident that these much-needed reforms will enable more rural Americans to benefit from telemedicine and telehealth services and will ensure more fiscally responsible administration of the RHC program.

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

Sincerely,


Ajit V. Pai



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

October 15, 2019

The Honorable Joe Manchin
United States Senate
306 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Manchin:

Thank you for your letter regarding 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.

The RHC Program helps health care providers afford the connectivity that they need to better serve patients. We have taken several steps to extend the program's impact to those who may not otherwise have access to high-quality health care. For instance, we adopted the first increase to the program's budget in a generation. Specifically, in a June 2018 Order, the Commission increased the annual RHC Program funding cap by 43%, to \$571 million, starting with FY 2017; adjusted the RHC Program funding cap for inflation, starting in FY 2018; and established a process to carry-forward unused funds from past funding years for use in future funding years. Thanks to these measures, all supported services provided to rural health care providers in the Rural Health Care Program in FY 2018 were fully funded.

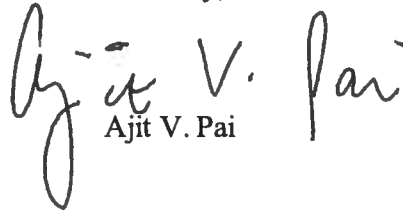
In addition, we must always ensure that scarce federal funds are being well spent. After all, every dollar misspent by an unscrupulous service provider is a dollar not devoted to telemedicine and the patients who need it. That's why, in order to promote the efficient distribution of limited RHC Program funds, and increase transparency and predictability for Program participants, the Commission adopted a Report and Order at the FCC's August Open Meeting which reformed RHC Program rules. The Report and Order (1) reformed the distribution of RHC funding to promote efficiency and changed aspects of the Telecommunications Program that encourage waste, fraud, and abuse; (2) streamlined and simplified the calculations of the discounted rates that health care providers pay for communications services and the amount of support received from the program; (3) directed the Program Administrator to create a database of rates that health care providers could use to quickly and easily determine the amount of support they can receive from the Program; (4) targeted funding to the most rural areas and those facing shortages of health care providers and ensured that eligible rural health care providers continue to benefit from program funding in the event that demand for the Program exceeds its funding cap; (5) simplified the application process for Program participants and provided more clarity regarding Program procedures; and (6) directed the Program Administrator to take a variety of actions to increase transparency in the

Page 2—The Honorable Joe Manchin

Program and ensure that all applicants receive complete and timely information to help inform their decisions regarding eligible services and purchases. The Commission is confident that these much-needed reforms will enable more rural Americans to benefit from telemedicine and telehealth services and will ensure more fiscally responsible administration of the RHC program.

I appreciate your 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, looping initial "A".
Ajit V. Pai



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

October 15, 2019

The Honorable John Cornyn
United States Senate
517 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Cornyn:

Thank you for your letter regarding 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.

The RHC Program helps health care providers afford the connectivity that they need to better serve patients. We have taken several steps to extend the program's impact to those who may not otherwise have access to high-quality health care. For instance, we adopted the first increase to the program's budget in a generation. Specifically, in a June 2018 Order, the Commission increased the annual RHC Program funding cap by 43%, to \$571 million, starting with FY 2017; adjusted the RHC Program funding cap for inflation, starting in FY 2018; and established a process to carry-forward unused funds from past funding years for use in future funding years. Thanks to these measures, all supported services provided to rural health care providers in the Rural Health Care Program in FY 2018 were fully funded.

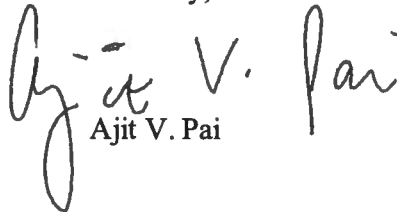
In addition, we must always ensure that scarce federal funds are being well spent. After all, every dollar misspent by an unscrupulous service provider is a dollar not devoted to telemedicine and the patients who need it. That's why, in order to promote the efficient distribution of limited RHC Program funds, and increase transparency and predictability for Program participants, the Commission adopted a Report and Order at the FCC's August Open Meeting which reformed RHC Program rules. The Report and Order (1) reformed the distribution of RHC funding to promote efficiency and changed aspects of the Telecommunications Program that encourage waste, fraud, and abuse; (2) streamlined and simplified the calculations of the discounted rates that health care providers pay for communications services and the amount of support received from the program; (3) directed the Program Administrator to create a database of rates that health care providers could use to quickly and easily determine the amount of support they can receive from the Program; (4) targeted funding to the most rural areas and those facing shortages of health care providers and ensured that eligible rural health care providers continue to benefit from program funding in the event that demand for the Program exceeds its funding cap; (5) simplified the application process for Program participants and provided more clarity regarding Program procedures; and (6) directed the Program Administrator to take a variety of actions to increase transparency in the

Page 2—The Honorable John Cornyn

Program and ensure that all applicants receive complete and timely information to help inform their decisions regarding eligible services and purchases. The Commission is confident that these much-needed reforms will enable more rural Americans to benefit from telemedicine and telehealth services and will ensure more fiscally responsible administration of the RHC program.

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

Sincerely,

Ajit V. Pai



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

October 15, 2019

The Honorable John Hoeven
United States Senate
338 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Hoeven:

Thank you for your letter regarding 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.

The RHC Program helps health care providers afford the connectivity that they need to better serve patients. We have taken several steps to extend the program's impact to those who may not otherwise have access to high-quality health care. For instance, we adopted the first increase to the program's budget in a generation. Specifically, in a June 2018 Order, the Commission increased the annual RHC Program funding cap by 43%, to \$571 million, starting with FY 2017; adjusted the RHC Program funding cap for inflation, starting in FY 2018; and established a process to carry-forward unused funds from past funding years for use in future funding years. Thanks to these measures, all supported services provided to rural health care providers in the Rural Health Care Program in FY 2018 were fully funded.

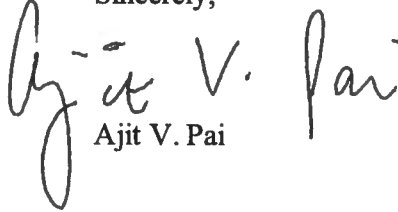
In addition, we must always ensure that scarce federal funds are being well spent. After all, every dollar misspent by an unscrupulous service provider is a dollar not devoted to telemedicine and the patients who need it. That's why, in order to promote the efficient distribution of limited RHC Program funds, and increase transparency and predictability for Program participants, the Commission adopted a Report and Order at the FCC's August Open Meeting which reformed RHC Program rules. The Report and Order (1) reformed the distribution of RHC funding to promote efficiency and changed aspects of the Telecommunications Program that encourage waste, fraud, and abuse; (2) streamlined and simplified the calculations of the discounted rates that health care providers pay for communications services and the amount of support received from the program; (3) directed the Program Administrator to create a database of rates that health care providers could use to quickly and easily determine the amount of support they can receive from the Program; (4) targeted funding to the most rural areas and those facing shortages of health care providers and ensured that eligible rural health care providers continue to benefit from program funding in the event that demand for the Program exceeds its funding cap; (5) simplified the application process for Program participants and provided more clarity regarding Program procedures; and (6) directed the Program Administrator to take a variety of actions to increase transparency in the

Page 2—The Honorable John Hoeven

Program and ensure that all applicants receive complete and timely information to help inform their decisions regarding eligible services and purchases. The Commission is confident that these much-needed reforms will enable more rural Americans to benefit from telemedicine and telehealth services and will ensure more fiscally responsible administration of the RHC program.

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ajit V. Pai". The signature is fluid and stylized, with the first name "Ajit" being the most prominent part.

Ajit V. Pai



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

October 15, 2019

The Honorable Kevin Cramer
United States Senate
B240C Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Cramer:

Thank you for your letter regarding 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.

The RHC Program helps health care providers afford the connectivity that they need to better serve patients. We have taken several steps to extend the program's impact to those who may not otherwise have access to high-quality health care. For instance, we adopted the first increase to the program's budget in a generation. Specifically, in a June 2018 Order, the Commission increased the annual RHC Program funding cap by 43%, to \$571 million, starting with FY 2017; adjusted the RHC Program funding cap for inflation, starting in FY 2018; and established a process to carry-forward unused funds from past funding years for use in future funding years. Thanks to these measures, all supported services provided to rural health care providers in the Rural Health Care Program in FY 2018 were fully funded.

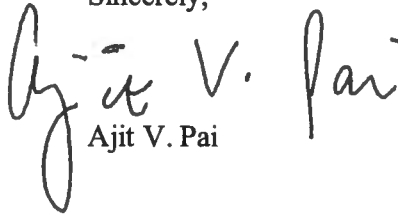
In addition, we must always ensure that scarce federal funds are being well spent. After all, every dollar misspent by an unscrupulous service provider is a dollar not devoted to telemedicine and the patients who need it. That's why, in order to promote the efficient distribution of limited RHC Program funds, and increase transparency and predictability for Program participants, the Commission adopted a Report and Order at the FCC's August Open Meeting which reformed RHC Program rules. The Report and Order (1) reformed the distribution of RHC funding to promote efficiency and changed aspects of the Telecommunications Program that encourage waste, fraud, and abuse; (2) streamlined and simplified the calculations of the discounted rates that health care providers pay for communications services and the amount of support received from the program; (3) directed the Program Administrator to create a database of rates that health care providers could use to quickly and easily determine the amount of support they can receive from the Program; (4) targeted funding to the most rural areas and those facing shortages of health care providers and ensured that eligible rural health care providers continue to benefit from program funding in the event that demand for the Program exceeds its funding cap; (5) simplified the application process for Program participants and provided more clarity regarding Program procedures; and (6) directed the Program Administrator to take a variety of actions to increase transparency in the

Page 2—The Honorable Kevin Cramer

Program and ensure that all applicants receive complete and timely information to help inform their decisions regarding eligible services and purchases. The Commission is confident that these much-needed reforms will enable more rural Americans to benefit from telemedicine and telehealth services and will ensure more fiscally responsible administration of the RHC program.

I appreciate your interest in 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". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Ajit" being the most prominent part, followed by "V." and "Pai".

Ajit V. Pai



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

October 15, 2019

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

Dear Senator Murkowski:

Thank you for your letter regarding 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.

The RHC Program helps health care providers afford the connectivity that they need to better serve patients. We have taken several steps to extend the program's impact to those who may not otherwise have access to high-quality health care. For instance, we adopted the first increase to the program's budget in a generation. Specifically, in a June 2018 Order, the Commission increased the annual RHC Program funding cap by 43%, to \$571 million, starting with FY 2017; adjusted the RHC Program funding cap for inflation, starting in FY 2018; and established a process to carry-forward unused funds from past funding years for use in future funding years. Thanks to these measures, all supported services provided to rural health care providers in the Rural Health Care Program in FY 2018 were fully funded.

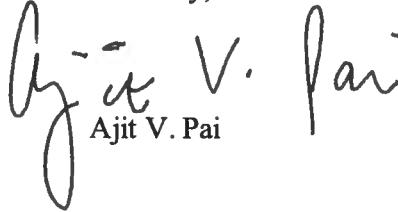
In addition, we must always ensure that scarce federal funds are being well spent. After all, every dollar misspent by an unscrupulous service provider is a dollar not devoted to telemedicine and the patients who need it. That's why, in order to promote the efficient distribution of limited RHC Program funds, and increase transparency and predictability for Program participants, the Commission adopted a Report and Order at the FCC's August Open Meeting which reformed RHC Program rules. The Report and Order (1) reformed the distribution of RHC funding to promote efficiency and changed aspects of the Telecommunications Program that encourage waste, fraud, and abuse; (2) streamlined and simplified the calculations of the discounted rates that health care providers pay for communications services and the amount of support received from the program; (3) directed the Program Administrator to create a database of rates that health care providers could use to quickly and easily determine the amount of support they can receive from the Program; (4) targeted funding to the most rural areas and those facing shortages of health care providers and ensured that eligible rural health care providers continue to benefit from program funding in the event that demand for the Program exceeds its funding cap; (5) simplified the application process for Program participants and provided more clarity regarding Program procedures; and (6) directed the Program Administrator to take a variety of actions to increase transparency in the

Page 2—The Honorable Lisa Murkowski

Program and ensure that all applicants receive complete and timely information to help inform their decisions regarding eligible services and purchases. The Commission is confident that these much-needed reforms will enable more rural Americans to benefit from telemedicine and telehealth services and will ensure more fiscally responsible administration of the RHC program.

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

Sincerely,


Ajit V. Pai



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

October 15, 2019

The Honorable Martin Heinrich
United States Senate
303 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Heinrich:

Thank you for your letter regarding 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.

The RHC Program helps health care providers afford the connectivity that they need to better serve patients. We have taken several steps to extend the program's impact to those who may not otherwise have access to high-quality health care. For instance, we adopted the first increase to the program's budget in a generation. Specifically, in a June 2018 Order, the Commission increased the annual RHC Program funding cap by 43%, to \$571 million, starting with FY 2017; adjusted the RHC Program funding cap for inflation, starting in FY 2018; and established a process to carry-forward unused funds from past funding years for use in future funding years. Thanks to these measures, all supported services provided to rural health care providers in the Rural Health Care Program in FY 2018 were fully funded.

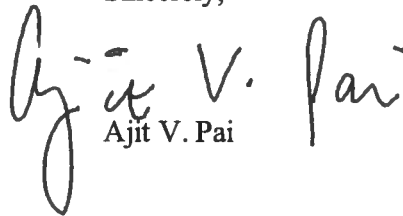
In addition, we must always ensure that scarce federal funds are being well spent. After all, every dollar misspent by an unscrupulous service provider is a dollar not devoted to telemedicine and the patients who need it. That's why, in order to promote the efficient distribution of limited RHC Program funds, and increase transparency and predictability for Program participants, the Commission adopted a Report and Order at the FCC's August Open Meeting which reformed RHC Program rules. The Report and Order (1) reformed the distribution of RHC funding to promote efficiency and changed aspects of the Telecommunications Program that encourage waste, fraud, and abuse; (2) streamlined and simplified the calculations of the discounted rates that health care providers pay for communications services and the amount of support received from the program; (3) directed the Program Administrator to create a database of rates that health care providers could use to quickly and easily determine the amount of support they can receive from the Program; (4) targeted funding to the most rural areas and those facing shortages of health care providers and ensured that eligible rural health care providers continue to benefit from program funding in the event that demand for the Program exceeds its funding cap; (5) simplified the application process for Program participants and provided more clarity regarding Program procedures; and (6) directed the Program Administrator to take a variety of actions to increase transparency in the

Page 2—The Honorable Martin Heinrich

Program and ensure that all applicants receive complete and timely information to help inform their decisions regarding eligible services and purchases. The Commission is confident that these much-needed reforms will enable more rural Americans to benefit from telemedicine and telehealth services and will ensure more fiscally responsible administration of the RHC program.

I appreciate your 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, looping initial "A".
Ajit V. Pai



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

October 15, 2019

The Honorable Michael Bennet
United States Senate
261 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Bennet:

Thank you for your letter regarding 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.

The RHC Program helps health care providers afford the connectivity that they need to better serve patients. We have taken several steps to extend the program's impact to those who may not otherwise have access to high-quality health care. For instance, we adopted the first increase to the program's budget in a generation. Specifically, in a June 2018 Order, the Commission increased the annual RHC Program funding cap by 43%, to \$571 million, starting with FY 2017; adjusted the RHC Program funding cap for inflation, starting in FY 2018; and established a process to carry-forward unused funds from past funding years for use in future funding years. Thanks to these measures, all supported services provided to rural health care providers in the Rural Health Care Program in FY 2018 were fully funded.

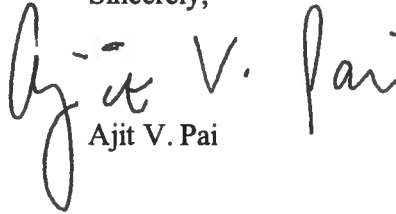
In addition, we must always ensure that scarce federal funds are being well spent. After all, every dollar misspent by an unscrupulous service provider is a dollar not devoted to telemedicine and the patients who need it. That's why, in order to promote the efficient distribution of limited RHC Program funds, and increase transparency and predictability for Program participants, the Commission adopted a Report and Order at the FCC's August Open Meeting which reformed RHC Program rules. The Report and Order (1) reformed the distribution of RHC funding to promote efficiency and changed aspects of the Telecommunications Program that encourage waste, fraud, and abuse; (2) streamlined and simplified the calculations of the discounted rates that health care providers pay for communications services and the amount of support received from the program; (3) directed the Program Administrator to create a database of rates that health care providers could use to quickly and easily determine the amount of support they can receive from the Program; (4) targeted funding to the most rural areas and those facing shortages of health care providers and ensured that eligible rural health care providers continue to benefit from program funding in the event that demand for the Program exceeds its funding cap; (5) simplified the application process for Program participants and provided more clarity regarding Program procedures; and (6) directed the Program Administrator to take a variety of actions to increase transparency in the

Page 2—The Honorable Michael Bennet

Program and ensure that all applicants receive complete and timely information to help inform their decisions regarding eligible services and purchases. The Commission is confident that these much-needed reforms will enable more rural Americans to benefit from telemedicine and telehealth services and will ensure more fiscally responsible administration of the RHC program.

I appreciate your 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 fluid and cursive, with the first name "Ajit" being the most prominent part, followed by "V." and "Pai".

Ajit V. Pai



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

October 15, 2019

The Honorable Ron Wyden
United States Senate
221 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Wyden:

Thank you for your letter regarding 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.

The RHC Program helps health care providers afford the connectivity that they need to better serve patients. We have taken several steps to extend the program's impact to those who may not otherwise have access to high-quality health care. For instance, we adopted the first increase to the program's budget in a generation. Specifically, in a June 2018 Order, the Commission increased the annual RHC Program funding cap by 43%, to \$571 million, starting with FY 2017; adjusted the RHC Program funding cap for inflation, starting in FY 2018; and established a process to carry-forward unused funds from past funding years for use in future funding years. Thanks to these measures, all supported services provided to rural health care providers in the Rural Health Care Program in FY 2018 were fully funded.

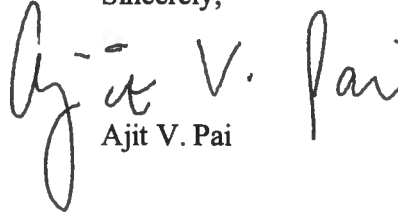
In addition, we must always ensure that scarce federal funds are being well spent. After all, every dollar misspent by an unscrupulous service provider is a dollar not devoted to telemedicine and the patients who need it. That's why, in order to promote the efficient distribution of limited RHC Program funds, and increase transparency and predictability for Program participants, the Commission adopted a Report and Order at the FCC's August Open Meeting which reformed RHC Program rules. The Report and Order (1) reformed the distribution of RHC funding to promote efficiency and changed aspects of the Telecommunications Program that encourage waste, fraud, and abuse; (2) streamlined and simplified the calculations of the discounted rates that health care providers pay for communications services and the amount of support received from the program; (3) directed the Program Administrator to create a database of rates that health care providers could use to quickly and easily determine the amount of support they can receive from the Program; (4) targeted funding to the most rural areas and those facing shortages of health care providers and ensured that eligible rural health care providers continue to benefit from program funding in the event that demand for the Program exceeds its funding cap; (5) simplified the application process for Program participants and provided more clarity regarding Program procedures; and (6) directed the Program Administrator to take a variety of actions to increase transparency in the

Page 2—The Honorable Ron Wyden

Program and ensure that all applicants receive complete and timely information to help inform their decisions regarding eligible services and purchases. The Commission is confident that these much-needed reforms will enable more rural Americans to benefit from telemedicine and telehealth services and will ensure more fiscally responsible administration of the RHC program.

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ajit V. Pai". The signature is fluid and stylized, with the first and last names being more prominent than the middle initial.

Ajit V. Pai



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

October 15, 2019

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito
United States Senate
172 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Capito:

Thank you for your letter regarding 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.

The RHC Program helps health care providers afford the connectivity that they need to better serve patients. We have taken several steps to extend the program's impact to those who may not otherwise have access to high-quality health care. For instance, we adopted the first increase to the program's budget in a generation. Specifically, in a June 2018 Order, the Commission increased the annual RHC Program funding cap by 43%, to \$571 million, starting with FY 2017; adjusted the RHC Program funding cap for inflation, starting in FY 2018; and established a process to carry-forward unused funds from past funding years for use in future funding years. Thanks to these measures, all supported services provided to rural health care providers in the Rural Health Care Program in FY 2018 were fully funded.

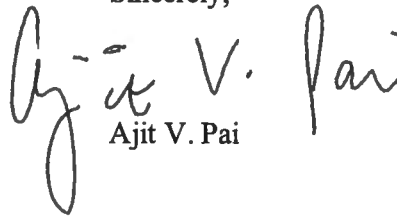
In addition, we must always ensure that scarce federal funds are being well spent. After all, every dollar misspent by an unscrupulous service provider is a dollar not devoted to telemedicine and the patients who need it. That's why, in order to promote the efficient distribution of limited RHC Program funds, and increase transparency and predictability for Program participants, the Commission adopted a Report and Order at the FCC's August Open Meeting which reformed RHC Program rules. The Report and Order (1) reformed the distribution of RHC funding to promote efficiency and changed aspects of the Telecommunications Program that encourage waste, fraud, and abuse; (2) streamlined and simplified the calculations of the discounted rates that health care providers pay for communications services and the amount of support received from the program; (3) directed the Program Administrator to create a database of rates that health care providers could use to quickly and easily determine the amount of support they can receive from the Program; (4) targeted funding to the most rural areas and those facing shortages of health care providers and ensured that eligible rural health care providers continue to benefit from program funding in the event that demand for the Program exceeds its funding cap; (5) simplified the application process for Program participants and provided more clarity regarding Program procedures; and (6) directed the Program Administrator to take a variety of actions to increase transparency in the

Page 2—The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito

Program and ensure that all applicants receive complete and timely information to help inform their decisions regarding eligible services and purchases. The Commission is confident that these much-needed reforms will enable more rural Americans to benefit from telemedicine and telehealth services and will ensure more fiscally responsible administration of the RHC program.

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ajit V. Pai". The signature is fluid and stylized, with the first name "Ajit" being the most prominent part of the script.

Ajit V. Pai



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

October 15, 2019

The Honorable Sherrod Brown
United States Senate
713 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Brown:

Thank you for your letter regarding 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.

The RHC Program helps health care providers afford the connectivity that they need to better serve patients. We have taken several steps to extend the program's impact to those who may not otherwise have access to high-quality health care. For instance, we adopted the first increase to the program's budget in a generation. Specifically, in a June 2018 Order, the Commission increased the annual RHC Program funding cap by 43%, to \$571 million, starting with FY 2017; adjusted the RHC Program funding cap for inflation, starting in FY 2018; and established a process to carry-forward unused funds from past funding years for use in future funding years. Thanks to these measures, all supported services provided to rural health care providers in the Rural Health Care Program in FY 2018 were fully funded.

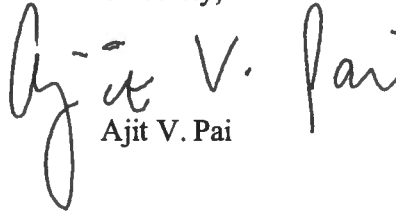
In addition, we must always ensure that scarce federal funds are being well spent. After all, every dollar misspent by an unscrupulous service provider is a dollar not devoted to telemedicine and the patients who need it. That's why, in order to promote the efficient distribution of limited RHC Program funds, and increase transparency and predictability for Program participants, the Commission adopted a Report and Order at the FCC's August Open Meeting which reformed RHC Program rules. The Report and Order (1) reformed the distribution of RHC funding to promote efficiency and changed aspects of the Telecommunications Program that encourage waste, fraud, and abuse; (2) streamlined and simplified the calculations of the discounted rates that health care providers pay for communications services and the amount of support received from the program; (3) directed the Program Administrator to create a database of rates that health care providers could use to quickly and easily determine the amount of support they can receive from the Program; (4) targeted funding to the most rural areas and those facing shortages of health care providers and ensured that eligible rural health care providers continue to benefit from program funding in the event that demand for the Program exceeds its funding cap; (5) simplified the application process for Program participants and provided more clarity regarding Program procedures; and (6) directed the Program Administrator to take a variety of actions to increase transparency in the

Page 2—The Honorable Sherrod Brown

Program and ensure that all applicants receive complete and timely information to help inform their decisions regarding eligible services and purchases. The Commission is confident that these much-needed reforms will enable more rural Americans to benefit from telemedicine and telehealth services and will ensure more fiscally responsible administration of the RHC program.

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

Sincerely,


Ajit V. Pai



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

October 15, 2019

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
United States Senate
709 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Baldwin:

Thank you for your letter regarding 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.

The RHC Program helps health care providers afford the connectivity that they need to better serve patients. We have taken several steps to extend the program's impact to those who may not otherwise have access to high-quality health care. For instance, we adopted the first increase to the program's budget in a generation. Specifically, in a June 2018 Order, the Commission increased the annual RHC Program funding cap by 43%, to \$571 million, starting with FY 2017; adjusted the RHC Program funding cap for inflation, starting in FY 2018; and established a process to carry-forward unused funds from past funding years for use in future funding years. Thanks to these measures, all supported services provided to rural health care providers in the Rural Health Care Program in FY 2018 were fully funded.

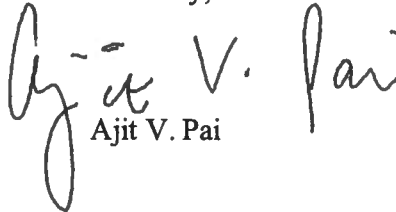
In addition, we must always ensure that scarce federal funds are being well spent. After all, every dollar misspent by an unscrupulous service provider is a dollar not devoted to telemedicine and the patients who need it. That's why, in order to promote the efficient distribution of limited RHC Program funds, and increase transparency and predictability for Program participants, the Commission adopted a Report and Order at the FCC's August Open Meeting which reformed RHC Program rules. The Report and Order (1) reformed the distribution of RHC funding to promote efficiency and changed aspects of the Telecommunications Program that encourage waste, fraud, and abuse; (2) streamlined and simplified the calculations of the discounted rates that health care providers pay for communications services and the amount of support received from the program; (3) directed the Program Administrator to create a database of rates that health care providers could use to quickly and easily determine the amount of support they can receive from the Program; (4) targeted funding to the most rural areas and those facing shortages of health care providers and ensured that eligible rural health care providers continue to benefit from program funding in the event that demand for the Program exceeds its funding cap; (5) simplified the application process for Program participants and provided more clarity regarding Program procedures; and (6) directed the Program Administrator to take a variety of actions to increase transparency in the

Page 2—The Honorable Tammy Baldwin

Program and ensure that all applicants receive complete and timely information to help inform their decisions regarding eligible services and purchases. The Commission is confident that these much-needed reforms will enable more rural Americans to benefit from telemedicine and telehealth services and will ensure more fiscally responsible administration of the RHC program.

I appreciate your 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 fluid and cursive, with the first name "Ajit" being the most prominent part, followed by "V." and "Pai".

Ajit V. Pai



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

October 15, 2019

The Honorable Tom Udall
United States Senate
531 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Udall:

Thank you for your letter regarding 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.

The RHC Program helps health care providers afford the connectivity that they need to better serve patients. We have taken several steps to extend the program's impact to those who may not otherwise have access to high-quality health care. For instance, we adopted the first increase to the program's budget in a generation. Specifically, in a June 2018 Order, the Commission increased the annual RHC Program funding cap by 43%, to \$571 million, starting with FY 2017; adjusted the RHC Program funding cap for inflation, starting in FY 2018; and established a process to carry-forward unused funds from past funding years for use in future funding years. Thanks to these measures, all supported services provided to rural health care providers in the Rural Health Care Program in FY 2018 were fully funded.

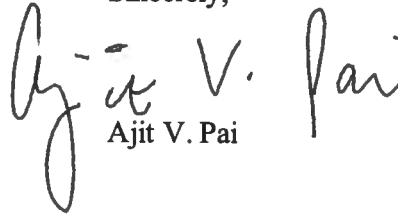
In addition, we must always ensure that scarce federal funds are being well spent. After all, every dollar misspent by an unscrupulous service provider is a dollar not devoted to telemedicine and the patients who need it. That's why, in order to promote the efficient distribution of limited RHC Program funds, and increase transparency and predictability for Program participants, the Commission adopted a Report and Order at the FCC's August Open Meeting which reformed RHC Program rules. The Report and Order (1) reformed the distribution of RHC funding to promote efficiency and changed aspects of the Telecommunications Program that encourage waste, fraud, and abuse; (2) streamlined and simplified the calculations of the discounted rates that health care providers pay for communications services and the amount of support received from the program; (3) directed the Program Administrator to create a database of rates that health care providers could use to quickly and easily determine the amount of support they can receive from the Program; (4) targeted funding to the most rural areas and those facing shortages of health care providers and ensured that eligible rural health care providers continue to benefit from program funding in the event that demand for the Program exceeds its funding cap; (5) simplified the application process for Program participants and provided more clarity regarding Program procedures; and (6) directed the Program Administrator to take a variety of actions to increase transparency in the

Page 2—The Honorable Tom Udall

Program and ensure that all applicants receive complete and timely information to help inform their decisions regarding eligible services and purchases. The Commission is confident that these much-needed reforms will enable more rural Americans to benefit from telemedicine and telehealth services and will ensure more fiscally responsible administration of the RHC program.

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ajit V. Pai". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Ajit V. Pai