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For Immediate Release

FCC PROVIDES RELIEF FOR RURAL HEALTH CARE PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Part of Ongoing Effort to Keep Americans Connected

WASHINGTON, March 26, 2020—The Federal Communications Commission today took a number of actions to assist Rural Health Care Program participants, including extending the Rural Health Care Program application window until June 30, 2020, among other administrative deadlines. Today’s actions are part of the Commission’s ongoing efforts to ensure that hospitals and health care providers have the resources they need to effectively respond to the coronavirus pandemic and keep Americans connected to critical services.

“The disruption to health care providers throughout the country as a result of this pandemic is indisputable and the FCC, alongside other federal agencies, is working to address these challenges head on,” said Chairman Ajit Pai. “Telemedicine continues to play a significant role in combating the ongoing pandemic, especially in rural areas. Today’s changes will allow health care providers to focus their attention on their immediate task at hand—addressing the influx of patients associated with the COVID-19 outbreak and continuing critical care for existing patients, thereby helping to control the spread of this serious pandemic. With our actions today, our hospitals and health care providers can devote more of their attention on continuing to meet the needs of their communities.”

As part of today’s Order, the FCC’s Wireline Competition Bureau took the following actions: (1) issued an extension of the RHC Program application filing window until June 30, 2020; (2) eased competitive bidding requirements for health care providers with expiring evergreen contracts; and (3) extended deadlines for responses to inquiries from the Universal Service Administrative Company, filing invoices, and filing appeals, among other deadlines.

To learn more about the Rural Health Care Program, visit <https://www.fcc.gov/general/rural-health-care-program>. Additional information is available in today’s Order, available at <https://go.usa.gov/xv3qP>.

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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. Cir. 1974).