

**MARCIA L. FUDGE**  
11TH DISTRICT OF OHIO

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**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

**WASHINGTON OFFICE**

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
2344 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515  
(202) 225-7032; (202) 225-1339 FAX

**DISTRICT OFFICES**

RICHMOND HIGHLAND CENTER  
4834 RICHMOND ROAD, SUITE 150  
WARRENSVILLE HEIGHTS, OHIO 44128  
(216) 522-4900; (216) 522-4908 FAX

LAWTON COMMUNITY CENTER  
1225 LAWTON STREET  
AKRON, OHIO 44320  
(330) 835-4756; (330) 835-4863 FAX

E-MAIL: <http://fudge.house.gov>

April 16, 2020

The Honorable Ajit Pai  
Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street SW  
Washington, DC 20554

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Dear Chairman Pai:

I write in strong support of The MetroHealth System's (MetroHealth) application for funding under the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) COVID-19 Telehealth Program. MetroHealth requests approximately \$1 million to procure critical lifesaving equipment to connect providers and patients during the ongoing COVID-19 outbreak.

MetroHealth, located in Cuyahoga County, is on the frontline of the COVID-19 pandemic and serves a high proportion of low-income and vulnerable patients – 75 percent of whom are uninsured or covered by Medicare or Medicaid. As of April 5, the county has recorded 781 cases of COVID-19, nearly as many cases as the next two counties in Ohio combined. Since March 13, MetroHealth COVID-19 Hotline has received approximately 6,700 calls, of which 4,000 resulted in a telehealth visit. Data gathered on April 5 shows 3,600 of these visits led to patients being told to self-quarantine in order to reduce community spread. Approximately 75 percent of MetroHealth's 4,000 daily appointments are now telehealth visits, up from less than 1 percent prior to the current public health emergency.

The funds requested through the FCC's COVID-19 Telehealth Program would allow MetroHealth to procure up to 300 Remote Patient Monitoring connected device kits. Each device contains a set of Bluetooth enabled peripherals designed to allow medical practitioners to care for patients remotely via live video telehealth exams and perform guided medical exams remotely anytime, anywhere. The connected device kits also permit monitoring of a patient's temperature, pulse, blood pressure, heart rate and weight. Target patients for the kits include people confirmed, or suspected, to have COVID-19, and those whose chronic conditions make them high-risk patients best at home.

Additionally, the connected care services and devices will enable MetroHealth providers to:

- Provide initial and ongoing connectivity to provide vulnerable patients with the care they need while at home, in accordance with social distancing and stay at home orders;
- Enable connection to MetroHealth's "Dr. COVID" referral program, which limits face-to-face interactions between providers and patients suspected of COVID-19; and
- Support continued at-home care for inpatient COVID-19 patients whose conditions have stabilized enough to allow them to recover at home, which will reduce the strain on hospitals and staff and free up resources.

By procuring telehealth connected devices, MetroHealth will be better prepared to protect the health and safety of patients and providers in Cuyahoga County during the coronavirus pandemic and beyond.

Thank you for your attention to this important project. I respectfully request that MetroHealth's grant application be given careful review and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Marcia L. Fudge". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Marcia L. Fudge  
Member of Congress