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CHELLIE PINGREE
CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
1ST DISTRICT, MAINE

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RESEARCH

CONSERVATION AND FORESTRY

April 23, 2020

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Mr. Ajit Pai
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th St SW
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Pai,

I write in support of the application of Spurwink Services for telehealth support under the CARES Act.

Spurwink is a critical nonprofit organization that serves Maine people who experience mental health challenges, addiction, trauma, intellectual disabilities and autism. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the 8,100 clients that Spurwink serves, its staff of 1,100, and the organization as whole has been profound. Spurwink's programs have pivoted in response to the COVID-19 pandemic in a variety of ways, all of which involve telehealth:

- Outpatient & Community Services made a rapid transition to telehealth
- Special education schools transitioned to distance learning for academics and treatment
- Residential programs for children and adults are all open and full, and have implemented technology solutions to connect clients with families and clinicians while also maintaining required social distancing
- All administrative staff are working remotely

The FCC grant will cover technology for staff and clients, allowing critical behavioral health services to continue despite physical distancing requirements. Spurwink's goals are to:

- 1) provide continuity of care for children, youth, adults, and seniors across Spurwink service lines;

- 2) make it possible for clients, staff, and the community to observe Maine's stay at home order while also following their treatment plans by eliminating office or clinic visits; and
- 3) protect staff from exposure to COVID-19 and enable them to continue working remotely.

The technology included in the application includes laptops, tablets, routers, fiber optic internet system and video conferencing systems and software. For many of Spurwink's clients, the digital connections to a mental health provider offered by these technologies is literally a lifeline. Spurwink is committed to maintaining contact with its clients so it can continue providing support for basic needs and essential life-saving care.

I have the highest regard for Spurwink and its work with some of Maine's most vulnerable citizens. Thank you for your careful consideration of Spurwink's application.

Sincerely,



Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress