

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3203

April 21, 2020

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The Honorable Ajit Pai
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street S.W.
Washington, D.C., 20554

Dear Chairman Pai:

I write in strong support of Cornerstone Family Healthcare's application (FRN # 024924748) for the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) COVID-19 Telehealth Program. Cornerstone Family Healthcare is a federally funded community health center that serves nearly 42,000 patients in Orange, Ulster, Rockland, and Broome counties in upstate New York and was one of the first providers in the region to offer testing for COVID-19. As of April 14, Cornerstone had administered 1,053 tests and diagnosed 411 individuals with COVID-19.

In response to the crisis, Cornerstone has repurposed their facilities for the diagnosis and treatment of COVID-19 patients who don't require hospitalization. In doing so, however, these facilities are now no longer safe for the treatment of Cornerstone's non-COVID-19 patients who still rely on Cornerstone for critical health care and related services. Telehealth has proven to be an effective alternative method for delivering care to these patients during the COVID-19 pandemic. Between March 15 and April 15, Cornerstone has completed over 3,100 telehealth visits with demand for telehealth services expected to increase by 3% each month as patients become increasingly unwilling to break social isolation practices to seek medical care due to fear of exposure to the virus.

Unfortunately, despite facing high demand for increased telehealth services, Cornerstone currently has minimal capacity to offer these services and requires additional funding. If awarded funding under the FCC's COVID-19 Telehealth Program, Cornerstone could expand their ability to provide remote medical consultations, behavioral and mental health counseling, medication management, substance abuse treatment services including medication-assisted treatment, urgent care, and care management services, and more. Additionally, this award would allow Cornerstone to add critical telehealth diagnostic services, such as auscultations of the heart, lung and bowels, as well as assessment of ears and inner ears, eyes, and skin, including skin rashes.

As you can see, Cornerstone is on the very frontlines of the battle against COVID-19 and desperately needs increased telehealth resources to sustain its vital operations for over 42,000 New York patients. I strongly ask that you approve their application so that Cornerstone can continue to provide these much-needed services to those in the community. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to reach out to my office.

Sincerely,



Charles E. Schumer
Democratic Leader