

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

Chairman Ajit Pai
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

April 30, 2020

Dear Chairman Pai,

I am writing in support of UPMC Hanover's application for funding in the amount of \$209,372.37 under the COVID Telehealth Program.

I thank you for the tremendous work that the Federal Communications Commission has done to expand broadband capabilities during this challenging time in order to meet increased telemedicine demands. As you know, the expansion of telemedicine in communities like the area I represent has allowed our health systems to reach high-risk patients in underserved areas at unprecedented levels. I have already heard from facilities in my district that are using their expanded telemedicine capabilities to pre-screen patients who are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and refer them for testing. Not only does this provide more convenient and expedient care while allowing a patient to be seen by their physician from the safety of their home, but also reduces the need for critical PPE resources and protects frontline health care workers from increased exposure to the novel coronavirus.

If approved, UPMC Hanover will use the funding to further expand telehealth offerings by expanding this care to reach more patients. For example, for high-risk patients in the community with known congestive heart failure, UPMC Hanover hopes to use these dollars to deploy remote technology to help them monitor blood pressure, heart rate, and oxygen saturation. This remote assistance will help the hospital reduce emergency visits, ensure continuity of care, and lower the risk of contracting COVID-19 for patients with diagnosed comorbidities. Reduced emergency needs will also help prevent our hospitals from becoming overwhelmed as they manage increased patient flow from individuals with COVID-19. UPMC Hanover serves a patient population of more than 65,000 people in mostly rural, lower-income communities. The hospital has already waived collection of upfront copays and deductibles to ensure everyone in the community has access to this low-cost and more convenient alternative to in-patient visits. Additional support provided by this grant will allow UPMC Hanover to continue offering high quality care to patients in need.

I appreciate your consideration of the application and hope to see swift approval to bring additional resources to vulnerable communities in Pennsylvania's 11th congressional district.

Sincerely,



Lloyd Smucker
Member of Congress