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For Immediate Release

FCC ANNOUNCES FUNDING INCREASE IN RURAL HEALTH CARE PROGRAM FOR FUNDING YEAR 2020

Up to \$197.98 Million in Unused Funds from Prior Funding Years Will Be Available to Support Rural Health Care Providers

WASHINGTON, June 30, 2020—The Federal Communications Commission’s Wireline Competition Bureau today directed the Universal Service Administrative Company, which administers the FCC’s Rural Health Care Program, to carry forward up to \$197.98 million in unused funds from prior funding years to the extent necessary to satisfy funding year 2020 demand for the Program.

“In 2018, the FCC took swift action to ensure that the Rural Health Care Program better reflected the needs of and advances in connected care. Looking to the future, we gave providers more certainty by adjusting the cap annually for inflation and allowing unused funds from previous years to be carried forward,” said FCC Chairman Ajit Pai. “And now, more than ever, our foresight is fortuitous, as telehealth is proving to be critical in our fight against COVID-19. Today’s announcement speaks to the FCC’s commitment to ensuring that rural health care providers can continue to serve their communities during this difficult time and well into the future.”

Interest in the Rural Health Care Program has grown in recent years and funding requests from health care providers for high-speed broadband had outpaced the funding cap, placing a strain on the Program’s ability to increase access to broadband for health care providers, particularly in rural areas, and foster the deployment of broadband health care networks. In 2018, the Commission adopted rules to address this increasing demand. Specifically, the Commission: (1) increased the annual Program funding cap for the first time in the Program’s history; (2) provided for that cap to be adjusted annually for inflation; and (3) established a process to carry-forward unused funds from past funding years for use in future funding years.

The Rural Health Care Program funding cap for funding year 2020 is \$604.76 million. But with today’s announcement, the total amount of support available to eligible health care providers for funding year 2020 will be \$802.74 million, the most in the Program’s history.

For more information on the Rural Health Care Program, visit <https://www.fcc.gov/general/rural-health-care-program>.

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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).