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For Immediate Release**FCC REVIEWS PROGRESS ON EMERGENCY BROADBAND BENEFITS, COVID-19 TELEHEALTH PROGRAM, AND EFFORTS TO IMPROVE BROADBAND AVAILABILITY DATA**

WASHINGTON, February 17, 2021—The Federal Communications Commission today heard presentations from staff on the newly established emergency broadband program for struggling households, the next phase of the COVID-19 Telehealth Program, and the Commission’s efforts to collect more precise and granular broadband availability data. At today’s Open Meeting, Acting Chairwoman Jessica Rosenworcel and her fellow Commissioners reviewed the progress made on:

- **Emergency Broadband Benefit Program** – The Wireline Competition Bureau provided an update on the Commission’s work to set up the \$3.2 billion Emergency Broadband Benefit Program to help those who are struggling to pay for internet service during the pandemic. The Commission will be using the Universal Service Administrative Company to administer the program and will leverage USAC’s operational expertise in managing the Lifeline program to process eligibility verifications and reimbursement processing for the new program. The presentation provided guidance on how providers can participate in the program and details on the specific benefits.
- **COVID-19 Telehealth Program** – The Wireline Competition Bureau gave a presentation on the Commission’s work on the FCC’s COVID-19 Telehealth Program. Under the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, Congress appropriated an additional \$249.95 million of support for this program, on top of the \$200 million provided by the CARES Act last March. This additional funding will allow the FCC to continue its efforts to expand connected care throughout the country and help more patients receive health care safely. The Bureau provided an update on the status of the initial phase of the program—including the invoicing process and disbursement of funding—and highlighted a number of steps taken over the past months to implement the requirements set forth by the Act. The Bureau stated that the next step will be to issue a Report and Order establishing criteria for awarding the funding appropriated by the Act and providing additional information about the application review process.
- **Digital Opportunity Data Collection** – The Broadband Data Task Force discussed efforts to date to implement the Broadband DATA Act and how the Commission will use a combination of vital data sources to generate more precise and accurate fixed and mobile broadband coverage data and maps. This will enable the Commission to target Universal Service Funding more precisely and ensure better data for future

Commission reports and analyses. It will also ensure that state and local governments, Tribal entities, and consumers will have access to granular nationwide information on the availability and quality of broadband services.

The slides and scripts from the presentations will be made available, along with the video from the meeting and Commissioner statements, at <https://go.usa.gov/xsrb2>.

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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).