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For Immediate Release**FCC IMPROVING SUPPORT FOR DIGITAL HEALTH IN RURAL AMERICA*****Commission Approves Several Proposals to Support Rural Health Care Providers with Broadband Costs and Other Communications Services***

WASHINGTON, January 26, 2023—The Federal Communications Commission today approved a number of proposals for the Rural Health Care (RHC) Program to make it easier for health care providers to receive support, reduce delays in funding commitments, and improve the overall efficiency of the program. Reliable high speed connectivity is critical for rural health care providers to serve patients in rural areas that often have limited resources, fewer doctors, and higher rates for broadband and telecommunications services than urban areas.

The Commission's Rural Health Care Program expands access to telehealth and telemedicine services by providing financial support to eligible health care providers for high-speed broadband connections and telecommunications services. Today's actions will resolve petitions for reconsideration on issues from the August 2019 *Promoting Telehealth Report and Order*, and adopt proposals from the February 2022 *Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking*. These actions include:

- Granting petitions for reconsideration to restore the prior rate determination rules and eliminate rules requiring the Rates Database for the Telecom Program.
- Amending the RHC Telecom Program invoicing processes to eliminate the Health Care Provider Support Schedule and move invoice submission until after services have been provided.
- Amending the internal cap application and prioritization rules to promote efficiency, reduce delays in funding commitments, and prioritize support for the current funding year.
- Dismissing as moot Applications for Review of the Bureau's guidance to the Universal Service Administrative Company regarding the Rates Database.

The Second Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking adopted today seeks comment on:

- Fine tuning the rules for determining rural and urban rates in the RHC Telecom Program;
- Reinstating the cap on support for satellite services in the Telecom Program that existed before the adoption of the Rates Database;
- Making it easier for health care providers to receive RHC Program funding as soon as they become eligible; and
- Revisions to data collected in the Telecom Program.

To learn more about the Rural Health Care Program, visit: <https://www.fcc.gov/general/rural-health-care-program>.

Action by the Commission January 26, 2023 by Order on Reconsideration, Second Report and Order, Order, and Second Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (FCC 23-6). Chairwoman Rosenworcel, Commissioners Carr, Starks, and Simington approving. Chairwoman Rosenworcel, Commissioners Carr and Starks issuing separate statements.

WC Docket 17-310

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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).