

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER MICHAEL J. COPPS**

Re: Amendment of Parts 2 and 95 of the Commission's Rules to Provide Additional Spectrum for the Medical Device Radiocommunication Service in the 413-457 MHz band, ET Docket No. 09-36

Discussions of spectrum use can sometimes get a little abstract and hung up on issues like competition, data rates, and interoperability. But every once in a while—and today is one of those “once in a whiles”—we get a chance to talk about improving everyday lives in really direct and meaningful ways.

I am pleased - more than pleased—delighted—that we are taking action that will dramatically improve the lives of potentially very many of our sisters and brothers who suffer from neuromuscular disorders. The devices we help enable today can serve as artificial nervous systems to restore sensation, mobility, and function to paralyzed limbs and organs, traumatic brain injury, stroke, cerebral palsy, and multiple sclerosis.

Today’s action allocates 24 megahertz of spectrum in four band segments for the MedRadio service on a secondary basis. The band here—400 MHz—is well suited for propagation inside the body. These devices employ the latest techniques for efficient use of spectrum and interference mitigation—tools like spectrum sensing and dynamic frequency selection. The devices’ low power means that they themselves won’t pose interference to their neighbors. So there is a lot to like about today’s order—the good it will do to restore critical functions for the injured, the innovative interference mitigation techniques, and the strong federal coordination with our partners at NTIA and the Joint Spectrum Center.

I salute the Alfred Mann Foundation for its work with the Veterans Administration and other hospitals under its experimental license, and its exhaustive research that has paved the way for our action today.

My hope and expectation is that we will soon build on today’s action by addressing related proposals for Medical Body Area Networks which have the capability to track peoples’ health status and which can prove hugely helpful in a number of scenarios, one such being emergency situations.

I want to pay special thanks to my friend, Commissioner McDowell—and salute him—for the leadership role he performed in getting this item moving initially. We wouldn’t be here doing this without him. It was an item he brought to my attention as soon as I became Acting Chairman back in 2009 and together we got it teed up then. I also thank the Chairman for following through and getting us to the finish line this morning, and other colleagues past and present who helped move it along in the interim. Thanks in addition to Julie Knapp and his talented team for putting together such a welcome and thorough Order that will no doubt change many lives for the better for years to come.