

**STATEMENT OF  
COMMISSIONER GEOFFREY STARKS**

Re: *Updating the Commission's Rule for Over-the-Air Reception Devices*, WT Docket No. 19-71

Last month, I had the privilege of visiting one of the Nevada Health Centers clinics in Amargosa Valley, Nevada – population about 1,500. Nevada Health Centers is the largest provider of primary care for the uninsured, underinsured, and geographically isolated in the state of Nevada. While there, Corie Nieto, the director of the clinic's telehealth services, deftly demonstrated how telehealth technology connects doctors from distant urban centers with patients in rural communities. Ms. Nieto explained that her office has a 25 Mbps connection, but when they use the connection for a patient, which they do many times a day, the rest of the clinic's internet service noticeably deteriorates.

We have all heard about the myriad benefits of telehealth—from virtual appointments with far away specialists to remote surgeries performed across continents. However, without a sufficiently robust broadband connection these lifesaving technological advances will be out of reach to the many living in rural America. Today's item, which seeks comment on proposals to update the OTARD rules and spur deployment of wireless infrastructure, offers a promising path toward increasing the availability of broadband services in rural communities such as Amargosa Valley. The next generation of wireless technology is expected to unleash tremendous innovations in many sectors, including telehealth. It is our duty to ensure that all Americans, no matter who they are or where they live, have access to affordable, high-quality broadband, and by extension, to the benefits and opportunities such a connection brings.

My thanks to the staff of the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau for your work on this item.