

**STATEMENT OF
ACTING CHAIRWOMAN JESSICA ROSENWORCEL**

Re: *Promoting Telehealth for Low-Income Consumers*, WC Docket No. 18-213, Third Selection Public Notice (October 26, 2021).

These are days when public health is front and center. The reason is obvious. This pandemic has struck so many of our communities and upended so much in our daily life. But these times have also revealed that we are resilient. That's because when new threats come along, we develop new ways to get along.

You see this very clearly with healthcare. When this cruel virus first visited us, our nation's healthcare providers did something extraordinary. They pivoted—fast—to telemedicine. This made it possible for so many of us to stick with our providers, keep up with our appointments, and seek diagnoses—safely.

I'm proud that the Federal Communications Commission has been able to support this effort on multiple fronts. First, thanks to the CARES Act, this agency provided \$200 million in support for telehealth projects when the pandemic first swept across the country last year. Second, building on this earlier effort, Congress gave us an additional \$250 million to develop the COVID-19 Telehealth program to assist health care facilities during this crisis. And now here, today, we offer even more support with an additional round of funding in our Connected Care Pilot Program.

The Connected Care Pilot Program is a \$100 million effort to fund a range of healthcare providers, including community health centers and rural health clinics, to deliver telehealth services directly to their patients, with a special focus on low-income and veteran patients. The program focuses on a number of conditions, including maternal health and high-risk pregnancy, infectious diseases such as COVID-19, mental health and opioid dependency, and chronic conditions like diabetes and HIV/AIDS.

Today, we announce the third round of selections for this program, funding 36 applications seeking over \$15 million in funding. Over the first three rounds of this program, we have selected 93 projects seeking \$69 million in funding, in 35 states and the District of Columbia. Today's selected applicants include a diverse group of providers. But I'm particularly excited to see a number of applicants focusing on maternal health, including the Children with Special Health Needs Branch of the Hawaii Department of Health. It's an area where we sorely need to improve outcomes in the United States—and there is evidence that expanded use of remote treatment, video visits, and imaging services can help.

A big thank you is in order to the healthcare providers who are embracing the possibilities of telemedicine during these pandemic days. I'm pleased that this agency can be a small part of helping them do so. For today's effort, special thanks goes to Matt Baker, Bryan Boyle, Adam Copeland, Rashann Duvall, Abdel Eqab, Veronica Garcia-Ulloa, Trent Harkrader, Clint Highfill, India McGee, Kris Monteith, Kiara Ortiz, Nick Page, Ryan Palmer, Negheen Sanjar, Joe Schlingbaum, and Hayley Steffen of the Wireline Competition Bureau and Michele Ellison, Elizabeth Lyle, and Bill Richardson of the Office of General Counsel.