



The Maryland State Medical Society

MEMO

TO: Gene Ransom
CEO MedChi, The Maryland State Medical Society

FROM: Andrea Mullin

DATE: April 22, 2020

SUBJECT: Additional Telehealth Grant Opportunities

Below are recent funding opportunities from The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) related to its COVID-19 Telehealth and Connected Care Pilot Programs.

1. **COVID-19 Telehealth Program:** This \$200 million Program supports health care providers responding to the COVID-19 pandemic by providing eligible health care providers support to purchase telecommunications services, information services, and devices necessary to enable the provision of telemedicine services during this emergency period. It will provide selected applicants with full funding for these eligible telehealth services and devices. In order to receive funding, eligible health care providers must submit an application to the Commission for this program, and the Commission would award funds to selected applicants on a rolling basis until the funds are exhausted or until the current pandemic has ended. [Information](#)
2. **Connected Care Pilot Program:** This three-year Pilot Program will provide universal service support to help defray health care providers' qualifying costs of providing connected care services. It will target funding to eligible health care providers, with a primary focus on pilot projects that primarily benefit low-income or veteran patients. The Pilot Program will make available up to \$100 million, which is separate from the budgets of the existing Universal Service Fund (USF) programs and the COVID-19 Telehealth Program. The Pilot Program will provide funding for selected pilot projects to cover 85% of the eligible costs of broadband connectivity, network equipment, and information services necessary to provide connected care services to the intended patient population. In order to participate, eligible health care providers must submit an application to the Commission for the Pilot Program, and the Commission will announce the selected pilot projects. [Information](#)

Eligibility for COVID-19 Telehealth Program and Connected Care Pilot Program:

It should be noted that only select "health care providers" are eligible for funding. **In this context, the applicable statute defines a health care provider to mean:**

- post-secondary educational institutions offering health care instruction, teaching hospitals, and medical schools;
- community health centers or health centers providing health care to migrants;
- local health departments or agencies;
- community mental health centers;
- not-for-profit hospitals;
- rural health clinics;
- skilled nursing facilities (as defined in [section 395i-3\(a\) of title 42](#)); and
- consortia of [health care providers](#) consisting of one or more entities described in clauses (i) through (vii).

Below is additional information from the FCC's recent announcement.

COVID-19 Telehealth Program: Today we establish a \$200 million emergency COVID-19 Telehealth Program to implement the CARES Act and ensure access to connected care services and devices in response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and surge in demand for connected care services. The support provided through the COVID-19 Telehealth Program will help eligible health care providers purchase telecommunications services, information services, and devices necessary to provide critical connected care services, whether for treatment of coronavirus or other health conditions during the coronavirus pandemic. This COVID-19 Telehealth Program is funded through a \$200 million appropriation signed into law as part of the CARES Act, and this program will not rely on USF support.

We will begin accepting applications for the COVID-19 Telehealth Program immediately after publication of this Report and Order and notice of the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) approval of the COVID-19 Telehealth Program information collection requirements in the Federal Register. We direct the Wireline Competition Bureau (WCB or Bureau) to review the COVID-19 Telehealth Program applications, select participants, and make funding awards on a rolling basis until the funding is exhausted or until the current pandemic has ended, consistent with the criteria outlined in this Report and Order. We also direct the Bureau to announce the selected applicants and funding awards for the COVID-19 Telehealth Program applicants. The deadline for filing applications for the Pilot Program will be 45 days from the effective date of the Pilot Program rules or 120 days from the release date of this Report and Order, whichever is later. We will review the applications and our pilot project selections will be guided by the criteria outlined in this Report and Order and our strong interest in targeting limited Pilot Program resources towards patient populations, health conditions, and geographic areas where we believe USF funding for connected care services is most needed. We will announce the selected pilot projects and our rationale for selecting specific pilot projects.

- The FCC will limit the program to nonprofit and public eligible health care providers.
- It is in the public interest to support connected care services being provided to patients by eligible health care providers even when provided from a temporary or mobile location that is operated by the eligible health care provider.
- Interested health care providers that do not already have an eligibility determination can obtain one by filling an FCC Form 460 with the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC).
- For purposes of the COVID-19 Telehealth Program, we establish a separate, streamlined application process in order to more expeditiously address the needs of eligible health care providers impacted by the coronavirus pandemic. Specifically, under the COVID-19 Telehealth Program, eligible health care providers must submit an application to the Bureau with sufficient information that will allow the Bureau to make selections and funding amount determinations.
- COVID-19 Telehealth Program applicants will also be required, at the time of submission of their application, to certify, among other things, that they will comply with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and other applicable privacy and reimbursement laws and regulations, and applicable medical licensing laws and regulations, as waived or modified in connection with the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as all applicable COVID-19 Telehealth Program requirements and procedures, including the requirement to retain records to demonstrate compliance with the COVID-19 Telehealth Program requirements and procedures for three years following the last date of service, subject to audit.
- WCB, in consultation with the FCC's Connect2Health Task Force, will evaluate the COVID-19 Telehealth Program applications and will select participants based on applicants' responses to the criteria listed above. Our goal is to select applications that target areas that have been hardest hit by COVID-19 and where the support will have the most impact on addressing the health care needs. As indicated above, the funds for the COVID-19 Telehealth Program will be awarded on a rolling basis until they are exhausted or until the current pandemic ends.

Report and Order: <https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/FCC-20-44A1.pdf>

Additional funding opportunities are listed below.

3. Distance Learning and Telemedicine Grant Program: Deadline: July 13

USDA Rural Development offers support to help rural communities use the unique capabilities of telecommunications to connect to each other and to the world, overcoming the effects of remoteness and low population density. [Application Guide](#). Second Application Window Opens April 14, 2020. [Information](#)

4. HRSA Telehealth Network Grant Program: Deadline: June 15

United States Department of Health and Human Services provides grants to promote rural tele-emergency services with an emphasis on tele-stroke, tele-behavioral health, and Tele-Emergency Medical Services. [Information](#)