

FCC Approves Second Set of COVID-19 Telehealth Program Applications; Waives “Red Light” Rule for Program Applications

April 22, 2020

The Federal Communications Commission’s (FCC) Wireline Competition Bureau yesterday approved an additional five funding applications for the COVID-19 Telehealth Program. Health care providers in some of the hardest hit areas like New York and Michigan will use this US\$3.71 million in funding to provide telehealth services during the coronavirus pandemic. To date, the FCC’s COVID-19 Telehealth Program has funded 11 health care providers in eight states for a total of US\$6.94 million in funding.

“Telehealth is proving to be an invaluable resource to treat patients during the coronavirus pandemic,” said FCC Chairman Ajit Pai. “From implementing remote patient monitoring to helping low-income patients receive care in their communities, I am confident that the funding we approved today will help health care providers expand their telehealth efforts in New York, Michigan and elsewhere.”

Below is a list of health care providers that were awarded funding:

- **Banyan Community Health Center, Inc., in Coral Gables, Florida**, was awarded US\$958,270 to serve 24 Medically Underserved Areas in Miami-Dade and Broward counties by providing telehealth services to approximately 2,000 low-income and high-risk patients so they can receive medical care at home during the pandemic.
- **Health Partners of Western Ohio, based in Lima, Ohio**, with 16 locations in Ohio, was awarded US\$737,098 in funding to provide telehealth services targeted at low-income patients by deploying telemedicine carts so they can receive medical care at 71 community locations.
- **NYU Langone Health, in New York, New York**, was awarded US\$983,772 to employ telehealth in operating rooms and conference room spaces that have been converted into intensive care units (ICUs) so doctors and health care providers can carefully monitor ICU patients from separate floors, thus magnifying the finite number of available ICU specialists, reducing exposure to the coronavirus, and maximizing the limited supply of personal protective equipment.

- **St. John’s Well Child and Family Center, in Los Angeles, California**, was awarded US\$382,331 to treat 21,000 patients in South Los Angeles and the City of Compton through remote patient monitoring, video consults and voice consults.
- **The University of Michigan Hospital, in Ann Arbor, Michigan**, was awarded US\$649,000 to implement remote patient monitoring for high-risk COVID-19 patients to reduce the need for hospital admissions and to expand video visit capacity so that patients with and without COVID-19 can receive medical care at home during the pandemic.

As part of the recently enacted CARES Act, Congress appropriated US\$200 million for the FCC to support health care providers’ use of telehealth services during this national emergency. The FCC began accepting applications on Monday, April 13, and will continue to evaluate applications and distribute additional funding on a rolling basis.

In addition, the agency waived its “Red Light” Rule for Program applicants <https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/DA-20-436A1.pdf>. Pursuant to that rule, action on applications and requests by any entity found to be delinquent in its debt to the FCC may be withheld, until full payment or resolution of such debt. The Wireline Competition Bureau and Office of Managing Director found that “the COVID-19 pandemic along with the tremendous efforts by health care providers to identify and treat patients with the virus constitutes extremely unusual circumstances. As such, in order to facilitate prompt review and processing of the maximum number of applications to the COVID-19 Telehealth Program, we find that it is in the public interest and good cause exists to waive the Commission’s ‘Red Light’ rule with respect to such applications.” To learn more about the FCC’s COVID-19 Telehealth Program, visit <https://www.fcc.gov/covid19telehealth>. To learn more about the FCC’s Keep Americans Connected Initiative, visit <https://www.fcc.gov/keepamericansconnected>.

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