

## FCC TO PROMOTE EXPANSION OF HIGH-BANDWIDTH CAPACITY TO SNFS

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has just issued a [release](#) detailing the establishment of the Healthcare Connect Fund (the "Fund") to reform and modernize its universal service program for health care. Recognizing the importance of high-speed data connectedness for quality patient care and burgeoning health care practices such as telemedicine, the FCC is expanding and reforming its existing Rural Health Care program.

While only a small part of the Fund, the reforms will establish a new competitive Pilot Program to test expanding broadband health care networks to skilled nursing facilities (SNFs). Because SNFs are often remote from doctors and sophisticated lab and testing facilities, frail and convalescing patients will benefit greatly from broadband services that can reduce the time, expense and stress of travelling to receive medical care. Up to \$50 million over three years will be available from the Fund for these competitively-awarded Pilots.

The Order implementing these reforms maintains a \$400 million ceiling on the cost of universal service support for broadband health care networks. Savings achieved by group purchases through consortia and other increases in efficiency could cut the cost of robust broadband health care networks in half for both providers and the Universal Service Fund, based on the FCC's analysis of successful Rural Health Care Pilots.

More details on these programs are expected in the coming weeks.

Should you have any questions, please contact:

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