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April 25, 2019

VIA ELECTRONIC FILING

Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W., Room TW-B204
Washington, DC 20554

Re: Late-filed *Ex Parte* Notices in WC Docket Nos. 02-60, 17-310

Madam Secretary:

In accordance with Section 1.1206 of the Commission's rules¹ we hereby provide notice of the following oral *ex parte* presentations in connection with the above-captioned proceedings. On Tuesday, April 16, 2019, Brian Thibeau, President of the New England Telehealth Consortium (NETC) and Connections Telehealth Consortium (CTC), and Jim Rogers, President of HealthConnect Networks, and undersigned counsel, met telephonically with Jamie Susskind, Chief of Staff for Commissioner Carr.

We discussed the April 9, 2019, letter from NETC and CTC to Chairman Pai and Radha Sekar, CEO of USAC, concerning continuing problems with administration and oversight of the Rural Health Care programs with a focus on detrimental impacts caused by continuing failure to release of 2018 funding commitments to consortia in the Healthcare Connect Fund (HCF).² While addressing waste, fraud, and abuse is always important, we noted that in NETC and CTC's experience growth in Rural Health Care program funding demand is being driven primarily by changes in healthcare delivery models and the pressing needs of economically and demographically challenged rural communities.

On April 5, 2019, Jim Rogers and undersigned counsel, on behalf of NETC and CTC, met with Wireline Competition Bureau staff as part of a larger group that included John Windhausen, Executive Director of the Schools, Health & Libraries Broadband (SHLB) Coalition, and representatives from the North Carolina Telehealth Network, the Utah Telehealth and Education Network, Alaska Communications, ADS Advanced Data Services, Inc. Attendees from the Bureau included Deputy Bureau Chief Trent Harkrader, Telecommunications Access Policy Division Chief,

¹ 47 C.F.R. § 1.1206.

² See <https://ecfsapi.fcc.gov/file/10409126859168/20190408%20NETC-CTC%20FCC-USAC%20letter.pdf>.

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Ryan Palmer, Deputy Division Chief Elizabeth Drogula, and staff attorney Johnnay Schreiber. During that meeting we discussed the SHLB Coalition's March 15, 2019 letter to Chairman Pai and Radha Sekar, CEO of USAC, concerning the continuing problems with administration and oversight of the Rural Health Care programs, affecting both the Telecommunications Program and Healthcare Connect Fund (HCF).³ We also discussed the scope and status of the current Rural Health Care program open rulemaking.

Please let us know if you have any questions.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/

Jeffrey A. Mitchell
Counsel for NETC and CTC

³ See <https://ecfsapi.fcc.gov/file/103152923226388/SHLB-RHC%20Ltr%20to%20FCC-USAC%20-%20March%202019%20-%20Final.pdf>.