

July 16, 2019

**BY EFILE**

Marlene H. Dortch  
Secretary  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20554

Re: *Notice of ex parte from the American Hospital Association  
Promoting Telehealth in Rural America, WC Docket No. 17-310; Promoting Telehealth  
for Low-Income Consumers WC Docket No. 18-213*

Dear Ms. Dortch:

By this letter, and pursuant to Section 1.1206 of the Commission's rules,<sup>1</sup> the American Hospital Association ("AHA") provides notice of meetings on July 12 between representatives from AHA and the Kansas Hospital Association ("KHA") and the Commission. AHA and KHA met with Chairman Pai and his wireless advisor, Aaron Goldberger. Representing AHA in the meetings was Kristina Weger. Representing KHA were Jennifer Findley, its VP Education and Special Projects, and Landon Fulmer, outside consultant to KHA.

During the meeting AHA and KHA representatives described the critical importance of the Rural Healthcare Program in meeting the broadband needs of healthcare providers in Kansas and across the country. We emphasized the growing use of telemedicine to meet the needs of rural hospitals and patients, the lack of competitive choices and high cost of connectivity for rural health care providers, and the essential role that the Rural Healthcare Program plays in addressing these challenges. AHA and KHA thanked the Chairman for raising the cap of the Rural Health Care program. KHA representatives described the importance of the program to Kansas healthcare providers. Since the establishment of the Health Connect Fund Kansas in FY17, the statewide consortium, led by KHA's foundation, has grown to 31 members, with 14 additional sites joining the consortium in FY19.

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<sup>1</sup> 47 C.F.R. § 1.1206.



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KHA encouraged FCC to consider increased coordination regarding the multiple definitions across government agencies of a rural area given the Commission's upcoming vote on the Report and Order reforming the Rural Health Care Program. KHA noted the use of the Core Based Statistical area classifies some rural areas as urban and vice versa. KHA also noted that the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services ("CMS") uses definitions for hospitals that are widely accepted among health care professionals and could be of use for the FCC regarding telehealth programs.

KHA shared that the Kansas state legislature created the Kansas Statewide Broadband Planning Task Force, to provide recommendations on a state strategy around broadband. We are hopeful that a statewide plan can complement many of the efforts being taken at the Federal level.

Please direct any questions to the undersigned.

Sincerely,

/s/

Kristina Weger  
Executive Director, Executive Branch Relations  
American Hospital Association

cc: Chairman Ajit Pai  
Aaron Goldberger