



## Texas Organization of Rural & Community Hospitals

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Received & Inspected

August 20, 2019

AUG 27 2019

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Federal Communications Commission  
Office of the Secretary  
445 12th St. SW  
Washington, DC 20554

Re: Veteran Telehealth and Broadband - WC Docket No. 18-213

To whom it may concern:

I'm writing on behalf of the 159 rural hospitals and 284 rural health clinics (RHC) in Texas to commend the Federal Communications Commission (FCC/Commission) for their interest, effort, and funding for a Universal Service Fund (USF/Fund) pilot program in support of low-income Americans and Veterans. There is growing acknowledgement in rural Texas that a big part of the solution to the geographical and access to care issues we face is technology and innovation.

Most – not all – hospitals and clinics are adding broadband infrastructure and deploying telehealth equipment and training to connect vulnerable populations to the specialty care they need. There is a growing awareness among the payer and policy-making community that preventive, forward-leaning care is also cost-effective, so there is progress being made with regard to telehealth reimbursement. And the provider community is becoming more integrated. So we would just encourage you to help finish the work to connect at-risk Veterans and low-income Americans to the care they deserve.

Our only suggestion would be to open the RHC program to for-profit rural health clinics with reasonable criteria on financial status limitations. Those clinics cover a significant portion of our state's rural geography, will certainly play a role in the network development, and deserve a seat at the table.

As always, if we can help in any way, don't hesitate to contact me directly (512.873.0045 or [jhenderson@torchnet.org](mailto:jhenderson@torchnet.org)).

Sincerely,

John Henderson  
President/CEO

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