



Marquette County Health Department

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RANDALL M. JOHNSON, M.D., M.P.H., DIRECTOR

December 16, 1996

Administration
475-9977

Clinic Services
475-7844

WIC Program
475-7846

Field Nursing
Services
475-4158

Environmental
Health
475-4195

Health
Promotion
475-7848

Dental Clinic
200 W. Spring St.
Suite 280
Marquette
228-4144

Office of the Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M Street, N.W., Room 222
Washington, DC 20554

Reference: CC Docket No. 96-45

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing regarding the important ramifications to rural local health departments of the 1996 Telecommunications Act. As the local governmental presence in this rural area, charged with responsibility for protecting and promoting the health of all the rural residents in the area, the ability to communicate electronically throughout the state and nation is imperative.

Local health departments are very important health care providers. For example, we are charged with responsibility for preventing and curbing epidemics, responding to disasters such as toxic spills, floods, the effects of hurricanes, etc. In these situations, access to the most up-to-date information from our federal health agencies, such as the CDC and FDA is critical. Receiving information from FEMA and other agencies in a timely fashion is critical to developing a systematic and comprehensive response at the local level. Better access to information and disease-prevention protocols at all times, and especially in emergencies, is essential for the provision of health care and will save lives.

We are pleased that local health departments are included in this Act. Linking all of the nation's rural health departments will assure that an information infrastructure is available for all Americans.

The Marquette County Health Department generally uses only audio-teleconferencing at this time. In addition, we have had some experience using the video-conferencing system presently located in a hospital in our region. Unfortunately, this system is only connected to other hospitals and we cannot use it to communicate with other local health departments, the Michigan Department of Community Health, the Centers for Disease Control and other important public health related organizations. The availability of improved telecommunications within the public health system is essential.

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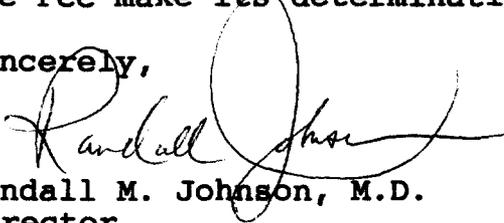


Federal Communications Commission

December 16, 1996

Please contact me for any further information that would help the FCC make its determination.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Randall Johnson". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Randall M. Johnson, M.D.
Director
Marquette County Health Department

RMJ/mt

cc: Congressman Bart Stupak
Nancy Rawding, NACCHO

Questions to Address:

1. Name of project:

U.P. Rural Health Project

2. Please list each of the project's sites:

Name of Site:	State in which it is located:
<u>Western U.P. District Health Department</u>	<u>Michigan</u>
<u>Marquette Count Health Department</u>	<u>Michigan</u>
<u>Dickinson-Iron District Health Department</u>	<u>Michigan</u>
<u>Delta-Menominee District Health Department</u>	<u>Michigan</u>
<u>Luce-Mackinac-Alger-Schoolcraft District Health Dept.</u>	<u>Michigan</u>
<u>Chippewa County Health Department</u>	<u>Michigan</u>

Please answer the following questions for each of your sites.
Use additional sheets if necessary.

3. What is the nearest city of population equal to or greater than 50,00 in your state, and approximately how far are you from its boundary?

City: Flint, Michigan Distance from city boundary: 388 miles

4. Name of the project's telecommunications service provider:

Telephone Carrier = Ameritech / A Business Conference Call, Inc.

5. Level of telecommunications service the project is currently using: (For example, voice grade, 144 Kbps (ISDN), 384 Kbps, T-1 or equivalent)

Voice Grade

6. Charges for telecommunications service:

Is there a monthly charge? No Yes

If yes, how much is the charge? _____

Is there a usage-based charge? No Yes

If yes, how much is the charge? ~ \$30/hr.

Is there a distance component (such as a per-mile fee) of the charge? No Yes

If yes, how much is the charge? _____

Was there an installation fee? No Yes

If yes, how much was the charge? _____

Is the charge the regular tarrified rate, or is there a discount from the telecommunications provider? Tarrified Discount

If there is a discount, how much is it? _____

7. How does the project use telecommunications in the delivery of health care? (For example -- to send x-rays, distribute public health information, or perform video consultations. Please identify any occasional or episodic uses, such as might result from an outbreak of disease.)

Presently the project is limited to audio teleconferencing. It is used to distribute public health information, coordinate service delivery (i.e. coordinate region-wide immunization special events, HIV/AIDS Prevention Planning, etc.). We occasionally use the videoconferencing system at a local hospital to access public health training programs or meetings hosted by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and/or the Michigan Department of Community Health.

10. Do you have e-mail? No Yes

11. Do you have Internet access? No Yes

If yes, do you incur long-distance charges by using it?

No Yes

Please estimate your number of hours of Internet use per month:

≈ 30 hours

12. If you have access to the Internet, please list any purposes other than e-mail (such as accessing databases such as Lexis/Nexis) for which you use it:

Accessing information/reports on Healthline, CDC's Wonder System
ATSDR databases, HRSA grant announcements, etc.