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96-45
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MAY 5 1997

Federal Communications Commission
Office of Secretary

From: Lisa Potetz <lpotetz1@aha.org>
To: A7.A7(rchong)
Date: 5/5/97 9:25am
Subject: American Hospital Association comments

This is a MIME message. If you are reading this text, you may want to consider changing to a mail reader or gateway that understands how to properly handle MIME multipart messages.

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Content-Type: text/plain; charset=ISO-8859-1
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Content-Disposition: inline

The following letter from James D. Bentley, Senior Vice President for Policy, American Hospital Association has also been attached in wordperfect format:

May 1, 1997

The Honorable Rachelle B. Chong, Commissioner
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M Street, NW Suite 844
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Commissioner Chong:

The American Hospital Association, on behalf of its 5,000 member hospitals and health systems urges you to fully implement the intent of health care access provisions of the federal Universal Support mechanism required by the Snowe-Rockefeller amendments of the Telecommunications Reform Act of 1996.

Eliminate Distance Charges

The law was written to ensure *rates comparable* for rural health care networks to those available to their urban counterparts. In our opinion, allowing continuation of distance-sensitive rates would violate the intent of the statute, making equal access to health care services via telecommunications virtually impossible in many rural areas. Please eliminate or offset the effect of distance-based charges so that valuable telehealth projects may be implemented equally for all Americans.

Internet Access

Increasingly, teaching and training, community health education, public health and other clinical health services are becoming available via multimedia desktop applications over the internet. At the same time, rural health care providers must pay significantly more for long distance and related charges to gain internet access. As you consider the range of modalities and technologies available to health care networks under the

Universal Services provision, we urge that you allow rural providers to = gain internet access at urban dial-up rates.

Qualifying Institutions

Within telehealth networks, many of the reference or consulting institution= s er actually located in urban areas-- though they are providing service = to their rural counterparts. We urge that the final order consider the = various hub and spoke and or multi-point networks which are emerging, = recognizing that many of these largely rural networks include one or more = academic health centers or other urban-based facilities. A link between a = rural and urban facility should be deemed service to a rural area eligible = for rate relief in the commission*s final order.

On behalf of the nation*s hospitals and health care systems, I want to = thank you in advance for your hard work in implementing these worthwhile = provisions, and offer our ongoing support on these and related matters. =
Let us know if we can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

James D. Bentley
Senior Vice President for Policy

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Content-Disposition: attachment; filename="CHONGFCC.WPD"

Content-Description: WordPerfect 6.0

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W. J. W. K.
NET FILE COPY ORIGINAL

From: Dan Turner <danturner@niu.edu>
To: J1.J1(FCCMAIL),A7.A7(jquello,sness,rchong)
Date: 5/3/97 3:15pm
Subject: Unethical/Illegal practices by long distance phone companies

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MAY 5 1997

Federal Communications Commission
Office of Secretary

TO: Chairman Reed Hundt: rhundt@fcc.gov
Commissioner James Quello: jquello@fcc.gov
Commissioner Susan Ness: sness@fcc.gov
Commissioner Rachelle Chong: rchong@fcc.gov

I'm sure you probably receive thousands of complaints. I would like to file a complaint against MCI. I have recently come across a deceptive act that telephone companies are doing to convince potential customers to switch to their service.

A couple of months ago, my finance, Rachel, was called by AT&T and asked to switch her long distance service. They told her all about AT&T's service and quoted some of their rates. One rate they quoted was for long distance service in the state of Illinois, saying that all her long-distance calls in the state of Illinois would only be .04 cents a minute. Because of this, she agreed to switch to AT&T. (She live in Gurnee, and I live in DeKalb and we have spent a lot of money in phone calls.) When she received the information about her new service, it stated that only local toll calls were .04 cents a minute and other long distance calls would be their regular rate (.15 cents a minute). DeKalb was not in the local toll call area for Gurnee. We called AT&T and they told us that Rachel must have must heard the salesperson wrong. (Rachel made sure to clarify with them a couple of times.) We thought that it was unfair to tell us one thing and then actually do another, but we could excuse an honest mistake.

Then, on Saturday, April 12, a salesperson from MCI called me in DeKalb to try to convince me to switch to MCI for my long distance. I was pretty happy with my current service (GTE) so I really wasn't interested until they promised me .04 cents a minute for all long distance calls in the state of Illinois. I was thinking "oh yeah, I've heard that before", so I questioned the salesperson about 4 times in different ways to make sure that I would really be able to call anywhere in Illinois for just .04 cents a minute. I was assured that I would be able to do just that, so I decided to switch to MCI from GTE. I received the information in the mail about MCI's plan and decided to call customer service to confirm my .04 cents a minute rate. The customer service representative said, "no, it's not .04 cents a minute in all of Illinois, it's .04 cents a minute only for local toll calls, otherwise it's .12 cents a minute." Ok, so MCI also lied to me to get me to switch to their service. I don't think that this is a legal practice. This is fradulant advertising. I had a verbal agreement with MCI that all my long distance calls in the state of Illinois would be .04 cents a minute and once I agreed to switch and received the information, found out that this is not the case.

The customer service representative I spoke with asked me to give her a number I called a lot so she could tell me what the price per minute would be. I gave her a number and she said that it would indeed cost

.04 cents a minute. I agreed to stay with MCI. I then received my bill, and I was charged .12 cents a minute. I called customer service again, and they said that nothing was .04 cents a minute and the previous customer service representative I spoke with was wrong.

