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MIDWEST RURAL TELEMEDICINE CONSORTIUM

400 University Ave. • Des Moines, Iowa 50314-3190 • 515-643-8750 • FAX 515-643-8928

July 23, 1998

Honorable William E. Kennard
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M Street, NW, Room 814
Washington, D.C. 20554

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

CC Docket Nos. 97-21, 96-45 and DA 98-1336

CC: 96-45

Dear Mr. Kennard:

I am writing on behalf of the Midwest Rural Telemedicine Consortium to comment on the proposed reorganization of the Rural Health Care Corporation (RHCC), Schools and Libraries Corporation (SLC), and Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) into one entity.

The 31 member organizations across the state of Iowa affiliated with the Midwest Rural Telemedicine Consortium anticipate that the Universal Service program will greatly assist us in reducing costs to provide telemedicine services to rural Iowans.

While we applaud the Congressionally mandated plan to consolidate the organizations into one entity, we are deeply concerned about the lack of rural health care representatives on the 18 member governing board and its 7 member Rural Health Care Advisory Committee. The proposed consolidation would include only one health care representative within its entire structure.

We urge you to increase the representation of rural health care interests to include members who understand the difficulties associated with improving access to quality and affordable health service in rural areas. Unless the health care community receives additional representation on the new Board, the FCC will not meet the goal of preserving the distinct functions, expertise, and mission of the rural health care program.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. If Midwest Rural Telemedicine Consortium can be of any assistance to you on this issue please do not hesitate to contact me at 1-800-637-2994 ext. 38750.

Sincerely,

Jim Reid PA-C, Director
Midwest Rural Telemedicine Consortium

- cc: Congressman Leonard Boswell
- Congressman Greg Ganske
- Congressman Tom Latham
- Congressman James Nussle
- Senator Charles Grassley
- Senator Tom Harkin

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