

HaysMedicalCenter

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December 11, 1998

Office of the Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW Room TW-A325
Washington DC 20554



**REFERENCE: Rural Health Care Corporation Request for Extension of Initial Funding Year.
CC Docket No. 96-45; DA 98-2468**

Hays Medical Center supports the RHCC's petition to extend the universal service support program for rural health providers from a 12 month calendar year cycle to an 18 month cycle thus extending the coverage from January 1, 1998 through June 30, 1999.

Extending the cycle to June 30, 1999 will :

- (1) Allow those who only recently completed the process time before they need to resubmit
- (2) Eliminate the need for those with pending applications to start over with new applications
- (3) Give those who are currently considering or drafting applications additional time they need to complete the process

As a rural health care provider it is imperative that every consideration be given to allow affected parties (the health care provider and the telecommunications provider) ample assistance in completing the necessary applications. The Universal Service support is necessary to provide quality health care in rural areas.

Again, we urge you to extend the deadline to June 30, 1999.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Robert Cox, M.D.

Robert H. Cox
Project Director

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