



July 20, 2009

Chairman Julius Genachowski
Commissioner Michael Copps
Commissioner Robert McDowell
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

Re: Docket No. 09-51 (National Broadband Plan)

Dear FCC Chairman and Commissioners:

Since its founding in 1891, the University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB) has dedicated itself to serving underserved populations in Texas. In the past decade, UTMB has become one of the world's largest providers of telemedicine, leveraging telecommunications technology for the purpose of improving health care delivery. With this in mind, we would like to thank the FCC for welcoming our comments on the development of a National Broadband Plan and would like to express our support for a strategy that ensures broadband Internet access and affordability throughout the United States.

UTMB currently provides broad and comprehensive telemedicine services to more than 300 locations and 60,000 patient encounters each year. Broadband Internet access has assisted us with delivering quality care by providing expert guidance via real-time consultation and monitoring. A comprehensive National Broadband Plan must include careful consideration for both an infrastructure for universal access as well as affordability for its consumers. What the nation may spend on such up-front foundations will surely result in tremendous health care savings down the line. In addition to providing telemedicine services, broadband Internet access will also enable institutions such as UTMB to assist health clinics, correctional facilities, and schools across Texas in implementing telehealth services and outreach programs.

We truly appreciate the FCC's work in developing a plan that enables every citizen to have access to broadband regardless of location or level of income. We hope that our comments will assist you in formulating such a plan.

Respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Alexander Vo', is positioned above the typed name.

Alexander Vo, Ph.D.
Executive Director
UTMB Center for Telehealth Research & Policy