



OFFICE of TELEMEDICINE

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Federal Communications Commission  
Office of the Secretary

January 11, 2010

Mr. Thomas Buckley  
Sr. Deputy Chief, Telecommunications Access Policy Division  
Wireline Competition Bureau  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street SW  
Washington, DC 20054

RE: Request to extend RHCPP: WC Docket 02-60

Dear Mr. Buckley,

This letter is to request an eighteen (18) month extension of the June 30, 2010 deadline to file appropriate Form 465's and Form 466A's for funding commitments for the RHCPP in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Since being selected as a participant in the Rural Health Care Pilot Program the Virginia Acute Stroke Telehealth (VAST) Project has faced a number of challenges. The University of Virginia, Office of Telemedicine assumed the lead for VAST Project that represented many stakeholders across the state. Since the selection did not allow for any funding for administration and management of the Project, this became an additional duty within the Office of Telemedicine. This truly is a labor of love. We believe that without Universal Service Fund support Telemedicine and Telehealth in the United States would not be a reality. For this we are truly grateful.

During the course of this Project we met a number of unprecedented and unforeseen challenges. First and foremost was the need for Letters of Agency from all participants. We were attempting to pull together organizations that had not worked together in the past and in fact may be seen as competitors. Many road trips and face to face meetings were required to get an initial team on board. And that is the crux of our request. After we issue the first Form 465 and RFP and have a program going we believe that some of the currently reluctant partners will join us. By granting the extension we will have more partners in the Project and thus better meet the goals of the RHCPP of more expanded broadband deployment. By this request we do not ask for an extension of the funding period (five years from the first Funding Commitment Letter) rather just the ability to issue RFP's through December 2011.

The Commonwealth of Virginia remains committed to the Project regardless of the challenges we face. VAST remains committed to the citizens of the Commonwealth and to our vision of addressing major health disparities in rural and urban Virginia using the continuum of care model.

Thank you for your consideration.

Eugene V Sullivan  
Director  
Office of Telemedicine  
University of Virginia  
Alternate PI, VAST Project

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Cc Mr. Ernesto Beckford