



June 1, 2011

Sharon Gillett, Chief Wireline Competition Bureau
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20554

Re: Letter of support for the Fort Defiance Indian Hospital Board, Inc. efforts on Navajo Nation

Dear Ms. Gillett,

Please accept this letter of support for the Fort Defiance Indian Hospital Board, Inc. in their application to the FCC Rural Health Care Pilot Program (RHCPP). The Navajo Nation is a vast and rural land that covers over 26,000 square miles of the American southwest. The challenges of providing healthcare in this rural environment can be impacted with Telehealth technology and its Telemedicine applications. The Fort Defiance Indian Hospital Board (FDIHB) has taken the lead on the broadband initiative and designed a network that would connect 16 Chapters, or local community groups, in the heart of the Navajo Nation's Fort Defiance Agency. The FCC is commended for the development opportunities created by the RHCPP initiative. The program is a testament to the agency's fulfillment of America's Broadband Plan to provide enhanced digital infrastructure to support healthcare for the underserved in America.

The FDIHB Telehealth Pilot Project provides opportunity to overcome barriers to healthcare such as transportation and access to specialized care through the use of communication technology. The pilot project's potential to stir economic development and generate higher revenue through reimbursement and cost savings should easily prove to be sustainable for many years. The complete Telehealth network designed by FDIHB will impact the more than 30,600 people currently served by the hospital. The population presently has the highest percentage of diabetic patients per capita in America. The health disparities found on the Navajo Nation are consistently 15% to 30% higher than the national average. The communication tools and medical devices supported by Telehealth applications will afford patients and providers new solutions that will result in long-term impacts to the overall health of the Navajo Nation.

Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory supports the FCC's efforts to fund tribal projects such as the Fort Defiance Indian Hospital Board's Telehealth Pilot Project. Additionally, we support the FCC efforts to fund the RHCPP and the continued sponsorship of Telehealth Pilot Programs as a means of increasing access to health care and decreasing the cost of providing care for all Americans. Your leadership and support of the Fort Defiance Indian Hospital Telehealth Pilot Project will make a lasting impact on healthcare for the Navajo Nation and all of Indian Country.

Sincerely,

Steve Grey

Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory



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