



April 2, 2013

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

RE: In the Matter of: Nomination for the Universal Service Administrative Company Board of Directors, CC Docket Nos. 97-21 and 96-45

The University of Montana wishes to support the National Rural Health Resource Center and National Rural Health Association nomination of Kipman Smith, Executive Director of the Health Information Exchange of Montana ("HIEM"), to serve on the board of directors of the Universal Service Administrative Company ("USAC") Board of Directors. Mr. Smith is being nominated to represent rural health care providers and has over 25 years of experience working in the health care industry in Montana, including most recently the successful deployment of a broadband network funded by federal universal service funds in a remote, rural Montana region.

Mr. Smith has worked extensively with rural Critical Access Hospitals, certified rural health clinics and federally funded Community Health Centers during his career. Most recently, through his leadership with the HIEM he has focused on adoption of electronic health records, health information exchange and shared telehealth/ telemedicine services. The University of Montana Information Technology Office and Kip Smith have worked closely together over the past three years to extend access to the Northern Tier Network and Internet2 services to the Flathead Valley Community College and the Salish Kootenai Tribal College as part of an EPSCoR grant from the National Science Foundation. Utilizing the HIEM network, affordable, high-speed connectivity from the schools to the University of Montana and the NTN is furthering research and education at those institutions.

The University of Montana believes it is important for the perspective of the relatively small, rural and frontier health providers such as those served by the HIEM to be represented on the USAC Board of Directors. The University of Montana believes Mr. Smith is uniquely qualified and capable to fulfill this role.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Loey Knapp
Interim CIO