



**CALIFORNIA
HOSPITAL
ASSOCIATION**

*Providing Leadership in
Health Policy and Advocacy*

January 31, 2014

Marlene H. Dortch
Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

RE: California Telehealth Network
HCP 17211 Denial of Eligibility for 29 Entities

This letter supports the appeal by the California Telehealth Network (CTN) of the denial of 29 healthcare provider sites to participate in the Healthcare Connect Fund (HCF). The California Hospital Association (CHA) urgently requests that the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) reverse this decision to allow non-rural healthcare providers that are not Federally Qualified Health Centers or HRSA designated Community Health Centers to participate consistent with the previous practices implemented under the Rural Health Care Pilot Program (RHCPP). CHA supports the participation of these healthcare providers as an integral part of the emerging broadband enabled healthcare delivery system CTN provides in the State of California.

The California Hospital Association strongly supports the CTN consortium and understands the importance of the participation of rural and non-rural healthcare providers in the delivery of broadband enabled healthcare services. Non-rural healthcare organizations are vital to the sustainability and provision of specialty care and other vital resources to the rural communities of California.

CHA fully supports an expansive implementation of CTN connections in both appropriate rural and “urban clinics” who are providing critical health care services to the medically underserved areas of the state. Health care organizations serving this population generally operate on thin financial margins but are highly motivated to participate in broadband-enabled health care delivery.

We strongly urge the FCC to move quickly to reinstate the eligibility of these healthcare providers consistent with previous RHCPP practices.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Peggy B. Wheeler".

Peggy Broussard Wheeler
Vice President, Rural Healthcare and Governance