

JORDAN CRENSHAW

Executive Director and Policy Counsel

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January 19, 2021

COMMENTS

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

RE: COVID-19 Telehealth Program Application Evaluation Metrics (WC Docket No. 20-89)

Dear Ms. Dortch:

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce (“Chamber”) urges the Commission not to limit participation in the COVID-19 Telehealth Program, as was promulgated in the initial April 2020 rulemaking, to the categories of health care providers (HCPs) set forth in section 254(h)(7)(B) of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended.¹

The Chamber applauds passage of the much-needed \$249.5 million COVID-19 telehealth program in the 2021 Consolidated Appropriations Act.² The Commission’s leadership under Chairman Pai in addressing issues pertaining to the Digital Divide and keeping Americans connected, particularly during the pandemic, has been commendable.

Neither the CARES Act nor the 2021 Consolidated Appropriations Act contained such restrictions, which prevent as many as twenty percent of America’s hospitals from participating in the program, and an even greater percentage of private skilled nursing facilities. We therefore agree that eligibility for participation in the COVID-19 Telehealth Program should be extended to all types of hospitals and other direct patient care facilities regardless of their size, location or for-profit or not-for-profit status. This approach will ensure that every healthcare provider that is well positioned to utilize that funding to serve patients has the opportunity to do so.

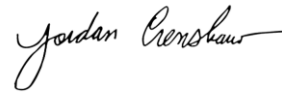
Thank you for the opportunity to participate in this proceeding. If you have follow up questions, I may be reached at (202) 463-5632 or by e-mail at jcrenshaw@uschamber.com.

¹ COVID-19 Telehealth Program, WC Docket No. 20-89, FCC 20-44 at para. 20 (rel. April 2, 2020); 47 U.S.C. § 254(h)(7)(B).

² PL 116-260, Division N, Title IX, Section 903.

Ms. Marlene Dortch
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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jordan Crenshaw". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line at the end.

Jordan Crenshaw
Executive Director & Policy Counsel
Chamber Technology Engagement Center