

\$200 MILLION FEDERAL TELEHEALTH FUNDING FOR COVID 19

Dear Local Healthcare Provider:

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) announced this week **\$200 million in Federal funding** for telehealth to fight COVID 19. This follows a previous Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) directive that relaxed telehealth restrictions on Medicare.

Description of Program

The FCC COVID-19 Telehealth Program will be open to eligible health care providers, including in rural areas, to support the purchase of telecommunications, information services and connected devices to provide connected care services in response to the coronavirus pandemic. The COVID-19 Telehealth Program will only fund monitoring devices (*e.g.*, pulse-ox, BP monitoring devices), that are themselves connected. The COVID-19 Telehealth Program will not fund unconnected devices that patients can use at home and then share the results with their medical professional remotely. No more than \$1 million will be awarded to any single applicant.

Applicants are urged to target the funding they receive through the COVID-19 Telehealth Program to high-risk and vulnerable patients to the extent practicable. The FCC recognizes that some health care providers may have been under pre-existing strain (*e.g.*, large underserved or low-income patient population; health care provider shortages; rural hospital closures; limited broadband access and/or Internet adoption) and **encourages applicants to document such factors in their applications.**

Who May Apply

Participation is limited to nonprofit and public eligible health care providers that fall within the following categories of health care providers: (1) post-secondary educational institutions offering health care instruction, teaching hospitals, and medical schools; (2) community health centers or health centers providing health care to migrants; (3) local health departments or agencies; (4) community mental health centers; (5) not-for-profit hospitals; (6) rural health clinics; (7) skilled nursing facilities; or (8) consortia of health care providers consisting of one or more entities falling into the first seven categories.

Interested health care providers that do not already have an eligibility determination can obtain one by filling an FCC Form 460 with the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) (www.usac.org). We will be pleased to provide guidance on this as well as to assist with confirmation of your eligibility pursuant to other Federal guidelines (47 U.S.C. § 254(h)(7)(B)).

Contents of Application

To be considered for participation in the COVID-19 Telehealth Program, interested eligible health care providers must submit applications that, at a minimum, contain the information detailed below.

- Names, addresses, county, and health care provider numbers (if available), for health care providers seeking funding through the COVID-19 Telehealth Program application and the lead health care provider for applications involving multiple health care providers.
- Contact information for the individual that will be responsible for the application (telephone number, mailing address, and email address).
- Description of the anticipated connected care services to be provided, the conditions to be treated, and the goals and objectives. This should include a brief description of how COVID-19 has impacted your area, your patient population, and the approximate number of patients that could be treated by the health care provider's connected care services during the COVID-19 pandemic. If you intend to use the COVID-19 Telehealth Program funding to treat patients without COVID-19, describe how this would free up your resources that will be used to treat COVID-19 and/or how this would otherwise prevent, prepare for, or respond to the disease by, for example, facilitating social distancing.

- Description of the estimated number of patients to be treated.
- Description of the telecommunications services, information services, or “devices necessary to enable the provision of telehealth services” requested, the total amount of funding requested, as well as the total monthly amount of funding requested for each eligible item. If requesting funding for devices, description of all types of devices for which funding is requested, how the devices are integral to patient care, and whether the devices are for patient use or for the health care provider’s use. As noted above, monitoring devices (e.g., pulse-ox, BP monitoring devices) will only be funded if they are themselves connected.
- Supporting documentation for the costs indicated in their application, such as a vendor or service provider quote, invoice, or similar information.
- A timeline for deployment of the proposed service(s) and a summary of the factors the applicant intends to track that can help measure the real impact supported services and devices.

Applicants must comply with Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and other applicable privacy and reimbursement laws and regulations, and applicable medical licensing laws and regulations, as waived or modified in connection with the COVID-19 pandemic.

How to Apply

Applications for the COVID-19 Telehealth Program must be submitted through the Commission’s Electronic Comment Filing System (ECFS) (<https://www.fcc.gov/ecfs>) under **WC Docket No. 20-89**. The Commission will begin accepting applications for the COVID-19 Telehealth Program after publication of this Report and Order and notice of OMB’s approval of the COVID-19 Telehealth Program information collection requirements in the Federal Register. *Interested parties should not submit applications for the COVID-19 Telehealth Program prior to publication of notice of OMB’s approval of the COVID-19 Telehealth Program information collection requirements and this Report and Order in the Federal Register.*

All filings must be addressed to the Commission’s Secretary, Office of the Secretary, Federal Communications Commission. Applicants must also send a courtesy copy of their application via email to EmergencyTelehealthSupport@fcc.gov. For questions, please contact (1) Rashann Duvall at (202) 418-1438, Rashann.Duvall@fcc.gov or (2) Hayley Steffen at (202) 418-1586, Hayley.Steffen@fcc.gov.

The FCC goal is to select applications that target areas that have been hardest hit by COVID-19 and where the support will have the most impact on addressing the health care needs. Funding will be awarded on a rolling basis until they are exhausted or until the current pandemic ends.

Please contact us if you have any questions. We would be pleased to assist you with this important initiative to support innovate healthcare that will play a critical role in maintain the health and security of our community.