

January 14, 2016

Marlene H. Dortch  
Secretary  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 Twelfth Street, S.W.  
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Ms. Dortch:

On behalf of the Healthcare Information and Management System Society ([HIMSS](#)) and the Personal Connected Health Alliance ([PCHA](#)), we are pleased to offer our support for the petition by the Schools, Health & Libraries Broadband Coalition, California Telehealth Network, New England Telehealth Consortium, Health Information Exchange of Montana, Utah Telehealth Network, Colorado Telehealth Network, and Southwest Telehealth Access Grid's [Petition for Rulemaking](#) regarding further modernization of the Rural Health Care (RHC) program.

HIMSS is a global, cause-based, not-for-profit organization focused on better health through information technology (IT). HIMSS leads efforts to optimize health engagements and care outcomes using IT. The organization produces health IT thought leadership, education, events, market research, and media services around the world. Founded in 1961, HIMSS encompasses more than 61,000 individuals, of which more than two-thirds work in healthcare provider, governmental, and not-for-profit organizations across the globe, plus over 640 corporations and 450 not-for-profit partner organizations, that share this cause.

PCHA is a first-of-its-kind collaboration between Continua, mHealth Summit and HIMSS, focused on engaging consumers with their health via personalized health solutions designed for user-friendly connectivity (interoperability) that meet their lifestyle needs. The Alliance puts the “consumer first” at the center of focus of care. PCHA promotes the global adoption, standardization and appropriate regulation of personal connected health devices and systems to empower people to self-manage their health, while creating stronger links between healthcare providers, consumers and their social networks. PCHA also works closely with regulators, government agencies and industry to create the technology 'ecosystem' required for delivering on the promise of personal connected health.

As highlighted in the [Public Notice](#), the Schools, Health & Libraries Broadband Coalition and supporting organizations filed a petition for on December 7, 2015 asking the Commission to amend Part 54 of the Commission's rules with a series of reforms to the RHC program and for the FCC to expand rulemaking on the topic. HIMSS and PCHA support the petition request to reexamine the Rural Healthcare Program by the Schools, Health & Libraries Broadband Coalition and supporting organizations. The need amongst many rural healthcare providers for access to high quality broadband access is profound. This need for wireless and wireline broadband access represents a critical component to furthering a nationwide network optimized for tomorrow's high quality healthcare

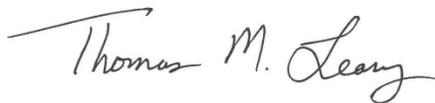
delivery systems. Benefits of expanded broadband access include the ability to conduct secure high quality eVists such as telemedicine and expanded remote patient monitoring within the home.

A great example of the benefits of expanded broadband for healthcare is evidenced in the work conducted by the [Southern Ohio Health Care Network](#) (SOHCN). SOHCN has done excellent work in expanding access to world-class care in southern Ohio an area of only 3.2 households per square mile that covers over 17,000 square miles. However, more can be accomplished by reevaluating the limitations of the Rural Health Care program and barriers encountered by providers when applying for funding.

HIMSS and PCHA are committed to being a valuable resource for the Commission regarding strategies for continued expansion of broadband access for use in healthcare. We look forward to the opportunity to meet with you and your team to discuss issues in more depth. Please feel free to contact [Jeff Coughlin](#), Senior Director of Federal & State Affairs, at 703.562.8824, or [Eli Fleet](#), Director of Federal Affairs, at 703.562.8834, with questions or for more information.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Thomas M. Leary, MA, CAE, FHIMSS  
Vice President, Government Relations  
HIMSS North America



Robert Havasy  
Vice President  
Personal Connected Health Alliance