

FCC Announces Opening of Connected Care Pilot Program Application Filing Window

November 16, 2020

On November 5, 2020, the Federal Communications Commission (“Commission” or “FCC”) released a [Public Notice](#) announcing the opening of the Connected Care Pilot Program (“Connected Care Program”) 30-day application filing window, which opened on Friday, November 6 at 12:00 pm ET. The Public Notice provides additional details on the application window and guidance on the Pilot Program application process. The application window will close on **Monday, December 7, 2020 at 11:59 pm ET.**

The [Connected Care Program](#), adopted in the [Connected Care Program Order](#), will make available up to \$100 million dollars over a three year period for selected pilot projects. The Program will provide financial support for qualifying purchases necessary to provide connected care services through the Connected Care Program, with an emphasis on providing connected care services to low-income and veteran patients. While the CARES Act allowed the Commission to quickly implement the short-term COVID-19 Telehealth Program during the early stages of the pandemic, the Connected Care Program is a longer term initiative to provide financial support for telehealth services. The Connected Care Program is open to eligible non-profit or public health care providers (“HCPs”) under the Commission’s rules. Eligible HCPs include post-secondary educational institutions, community health centers, local health departments or agencies, community mental health centers, not-for-profit hospitals, rural health clinics, skilled nursing facilities, and consortia of health care providers consisting of one or more of these entities. These providers can be located in either rural or non-rural areas, and eligible non-rural health care providers are not required to be part of a majority rural consortium.

Selected pilot projects will receive universal service support to offset 85% of the qualifying costs incurred in connection with the Connected Care Program, while the remaining 15% share of the eligible services costs and ineligible expenses are to be paid by the recipients. Specifically, eligible service costs include: (1) patient Broadband Internet access services; (2) health care provider broadband data connections; (3) connected care information services; and (4) certain network equipment (i.e., network equipment necessary to make supported broadband service functional). The Public Notice provides an extensive list of specific examples of types of items and services that are eligible for support.

The Public Notice details the application instructions for filing and reminds applicants that in order to file an application, they must have an approved FCC Form 460 (Eligibility and Registration Form) on file. Additionally, the Commission reminds applicants that all sites included in an application must each be approved as eligible. The Commission encourages interested parties to submit applications as soon as possible after the window opens, as applications will be considered on a rolling basis. Applications will be accepted through an online application system available on the USAC website. Applications submitted after the deadline, however, will not be considered. Following the close of the

window, timely filed applications will be made publicly available in ECFS under Docket No. WC 18-213.

Kelly Drye will continue to monitor the Connected Care Program proceeding, so continue to check back for updates.