



# PUBLIC NOTICE

Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> St., S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20554

News Media Information 202 / 418-0500  
Internet: <https://www.fcc.gov>  
TTY: 1-888-835-5322

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## WIRELINE COMPETITION BUREAU ANNOUNCES CLOSE OF FILING WINDOW FOR COVID-19 TELEHEALTH PROGRAM

WC Docket No. 20-89

By this Public Notice, the Wireline Competition Bureau (Bureau) announces that it will no longer accept new applications for funding from the COVID-19 Telehealth Program (Program). Based on the applications received to date, demand for funding exceeds available Program funds and, as a result, the public interest is not served by imposing burdens on health care providers who may prepare new applications that cannot be funded under the current appropriation.

As part of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, Congress appropriated \$200 million to the Commission “to support efforts of health care providers to address coronavirus by providing telecommunications services, information services, and devices necessary to enable the provision of telehealth services.”<sup>1</sup> In a *Report and Order* released April 2, 2020, the Commission established the COVID-19 Telehealth Program to administer the \$200 million in congressionally appropriated funding to help eligible health care providers purchase eligible telehealth services and devices to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>2</sup> The Commission directed the Bureau to administer the Program by reviewing Program applications and awarding funding commitments on a rolling basis until the funding is exhausted or until the COVID-19 pandemic has ended.<sup>3</sup> The Commission also directed the Bureau to announce the selected applicants and funding awards for the Program applicants.<sup>4</sup>

Consistent with the Commission’s direction, the Bureau began accepting applications for the Program on April 13, 2020.<sup>5</sup> Since then, the Bureau has continued to expeditiously review applications and issue funding commitments and, in accordance with the Commission’s *Report and Order*, has prioritized funding 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.<sup>6</sup> As of June 24, 2020, the Bureau has issued \$157.64 million in total Program funding commitments for 444 applications.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, Pub. L. No 116-136, 134 Stat. 281 (2020).

<sup>2</sup> *Promoting Telehealth for Low-Income Consumers; COVID-19 Telehealth Program*, WC Docket Nos. 18-213, 20-89, Report and Order, 35 FCC Rcd 3366, 3375-84, paras. 15-36 (2020) (*Report and Order*).

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* at 3376-77, para. 17.

<sup>4</sup> *Id.*

<sup>5</sup> *Wireline Competition Bureau Announces COVID-19 Telehealth Program Application Portal Will Open Monday*, WC Docket No. 20-89, Public Notice, 35 FCC Rcd 3076 (WCB 2020).

<sup>6</sup> *Report and Order*, 35 FCC Rcd at 3381, para. 28.

<sup>7</sup> Press Release, FCC, FCC Approves Twelfth Set of COVID-19 Telehealth Program Applications (June 24, 2020), <https://www.fcc.gov/document/fcc-approves-twelfth-set-covid-19-telehealth-program-applications>.

The Bureau anticipates that funding requests in applications already received will exhaust the remaining Program appropriation and continuing to consider applications would impose unnecessary burdens on health care providers who may be preparing applications that will not be considered before the Program funds are exhausted. Therefore, it is not in the public interest to accept new Program applications.<sup>8</sup>

For further information about this Public Notice, please email [TelehealthApplicationSupport@fcc.gov](mailto:TelehealthApplicationSupport@fcc.gov).

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<sup>8</sup> The Bureau further acknowledges that applications already received may not receive Program funding commitments because the existing Program demand may already exceed available funding.