

Media Contact:

Evan Swarztrauber, (202) 418-2261
evan.swarztrauber@fcc.gov

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Commissioner Carr Announces \$100 Million ‘Connected Care Pilot Program’

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Today, in an [op-ed](#) with Senator Roger Wicker, Commissioner Brendan Carr announced that the FCC will seek to establish a new \$100 million “Connected Care Pilot Program” to support telehealth for low-income Americans, especially those living in rural areas and veterans.

“We’re seeing a trend in telehealth towards connected care everywhere,” said Commissioner Carr. “The FCC has long supported the deployment of broadband to healthcare facilities, but advances in technology mean that high-tech, life-saving services are no longer limited to the confines of connected, brick-and-mortar facilities. I saw this firsthand when I visited Mississippi six months ago and learned about a remote patient monitoring trial that improved outcomes for diabetes patients living in the rural Mississippi Delta. Since then, my office has been meeting with experts in this field, visiting rural health care facilities, and working to see how the FCC can support this movement towards connected care.

“Given the significant cost savings and improved patient outcomes associated with connected care, we should align public policy in support of this movement in telehealth. At the FCC, we can play a constructive role by helping to support the connectivity and deployments needed to ensure that all communities get a fair shot at benefiting from new telehealth technologies. I look forward to working with my colleagues at the FCC, federal and state partners that are active on these issues, and all stakeholders as we seek comment on establishing the Connected Care Pilot Program.”

The FCC will vote on a Notice of Inquiry at its August Open Meeting that seeks comment on:

- Budgeting for \$100 million in USF support
- Targeting support to connected care deployments that would benefit low-income patients, including those eligible for Medicaid or veterans receiving cost-free medical care
- Supporting a limited number of projects over a two- or three-year period with controls in place to measure and verify the benefits, costs, and savings associated with connected care deployments

Investments in connected care have resulted in substantial savings, particularly in the management of chronic diseases, which account for over 85% of direct health care spending in the U.S.:

- The Mississippi Delta trial resulted in nearly \$700,000 in annual savings due to reductions in hospital readmissions alone. Assuming just 20% of Mississippi’s diabetic population enrolled in this program, Medicaid savings in the state would be \$189 million per year.
- The Veterans Health Administration’s (VHA) remote patient monitoring program cost \$1,600 per patient compared to more than \$13,000 per patient for VHA’s home-based primary services.
- A telehealth project in the Northeastern U.S. found that every \$1 spent on remote monitoring resulted in a \$3.30 return in savings.

Connected care technologies are also improving health outcomes for patients:

- A study of 20 remote patient monitoring trials found a 20% reduction in all-cause mortality and a 15% reduction in heart failure-related hospitalizations
- The VHA's remote patient monitoring program resulted in a 25% reduction in days of inpatient care and a 19% reduction in hospital admission
- One remote patient monitoring initiative showed a 46% reduction in ER visits, a 53% reduction in hospital admissions, and a 25% shorter length of stay

"I want to thank Chairman Pai who, as the son of two doctors, appreciates the role that telemedicine plays in connecting rural communities to health care opportunities. I am grateful for the support he has shown as my office has worked on developing this Pilot Program," Commission Carr stated. "I also want to thank the leadership shown on these issues by Senators John Thune, Roger Wicker, Deb Fischer, Cory Gardner, and Todd Young who have all urged the FCC to take additional steps in support of connected care deployments," Commissioner Carr said.

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For press inquiries, contact Evan Swarztrauber at evan.swarztrauber@fcc.gov or (202) 418-2261.

Office of Commissioner Brendan Carr: (202) 418-2200
ASL Videophone: (844) 432-2275
TTY: (888) 835-5322
Twitter: @BrendanCarrFCC
www.fcc.gov/about/leadership/brendan-carr

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