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FCC Provides Telehealth Funding...But Act Fast

4.21.2020

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act (CARES) Act (Pub.L.116-136) has resulted in the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) announcing the new COVID-19 Telehealth Program which will provide \$200 Million in funding to both rural and non-rural health care providers offering telehealth services to patients in response to the pandemic. The Telehealth Program will provide up to \$1 Million to fully fund a health care provider's costs of telecommunication services, information services and devices necessary to provide critical connected care. This FCC program will be available until the funds are exhausted or the pandemic has ended.

The following are eligible providers:

- Post-secondary educational institutions offering health care instruction, teaching hospitals, and medical schools
- Community health centers or health centers providing health care to migrants
- Local health departments or agencies
- Community mental health centers
- Not-for-profit hospitals
- Rural health clinics
- Skilled nursing facilities
- Consortia of health care providers consisting of one or more entities falling into the first seven categories

A public notice has been being released by the FCC (<https://www.fcc.gov/document/fccs-covid-19-telehealth-program-application-portal-opens-monday>) announcing the application acceptance date and opening date for a new portal on the FCC's Keep Americans Connected webpage at fcc.gov/keep-americans-connected. Applications are to be submitted from March 13, 2020, to September 30, 2020, through this online portal,

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CLIENT ALERTS

although health care providers should get their applications in as soon as possible, because the FCC is seeking to distribute the money quickly, and once the \$200 Million runs out, no further funding will be available. Some of the services and devices included in this Telehealth Program are:

1. Telecommunications services and broadband connectivity services, voice services and internet connectivity services for health care providers and patients;
2. Information services, such as remote patient monitoring platforms and services, patient-reported outcome platforms, store and forward services, platforms and services to provide synchronous video consultation; and
3. Internet-connected devices/equipment, such as tablets, smartphones or connected devices to receive connected care services at home. The COVID-19 Telehealth Program will not fund unconnected devices that patients can use at home and then share the results with their medical professionals remotely.

Interested health care providers are alerted to the following 3 steps:

1. Obtain an eligibility determination from the Universal Service Administrative Company by completing FCC Form 460 which is available at usac.org/rural-health-care/resources/forms. Questions regarding eligibility and on how to complete the Form 460 may be answered by calling 800-453-1546 or e-mail RHC-Assist@usac.org.
2. Obtain an FCC Registration number. You may click on the following link to obtain an FCC Registration number: apps.fcc.gov/cores/userLogin.do Users will have to provide their employer identification number to register.
3. Register with System for Award Management which is recommended, but not required. **<http://www.sam.gov>**

Also, please see the following notices: April 16, 2020, wherein the FCC on April 16, 2020, approved the first Telehealth Program Application, demonstrating how quickly the FCC will be moving to disburse funds (<https://www.fcc.gov/document/fcc-approves-first-set-covid-19-telehealth-program-applications>) and on April 17, 2020, Invoicing Guidance for the COVID-19 Telehealth Program (<https://www.fcc.gov/document/invoicing-guidance-covid-19-telehealth-program>). Please let us know if we can help you navigate this FCC program. Additional information is also available from the FCC.

For more information and to submit an application online, click [here](#).

For the FCC's answers to frequently asked questions, click [FAQ](#)

To view the FCC's short webinar guiding applicants through the application process, click [FCC Telehealth Fund Webinar](#).

Application-specific questions may be directed to TelehealthApplicationSupport@fcc.gov.

CLIENT ALERTS

General questions may be directed to EmergencyTelehealthSupport@fcc.gov.

Please contact the authors of this alert or any member of the Butzel Long Healthcare Industry Team with any questions regarding Telehealth Funding. For more information resources on all COVID-19 related legislation, programs, and orders from both federal and state authorities, see the Butzel Long Coronavirus Resource Center.

Robert H. Schwartz

248.258.2611
schwartzrh@butzel.com

Steve Goodman

202.454.2851
goodman@butzel.com

Debra Geroux, CHC, CHPC

248.258.2603
geroux@butzel.com

Mark R. Lezotte

313.225.7058
lezotte@butzel.com