

Health Information Compliance Alert

Enforcement News: FCC Moves to Increase Telehealth Options for Rural America

Despite studies that suggest telehealth is underutilized in the United States, the feds see innovations in this health tech arena as a way to help rural America's physician shortage.

Late last year, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) proposed increasing its current \$400 million budget for telehealth for providers in the Rural Health Care (RHC) Program.

Why: "For Americans living in rural and isolated areas, doctor shortages and hospital closures are endemic, and obtaining access to high-quality healthcare remains a constant challenge," stated a FCC memo from last December. "Broadband connectivity has the potential to address such barriers to care by delivering telehealth services and access to cutting-edge healthcare treatments."

The FCC's proposal also includes reforming its current system, a simplified process for joining, better oversight, and a definition of its "cost-effectiveness," the release suggested.

The FCC is currently taking stakeholder feedback on its proposed rule.

Resource: For a look at the FCC release, visit https://apps.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/DOC-348255A1.pdf.