

Health Information Compliance Alert

Feds Pump Funds Into FCC Telehealth Program

As part of its recent stimulus efforts, the government decided to promote telehealth with more funding opportunities.

After significant negotiations, Congress passed H.R. 133 on Dec. 21, 2020. The bill, which is titled the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, was signed into law on Dec. 27, 2020 by President **Trump** and contains a \$900 billion COVID-19 relief package with several provisions and extensions specifically for healthcare. Among the many stimulus offerings is a substantial amount of money to re-up the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) COVID-19 Telehealth Program.



Reminder: The CARES Act allocated \$200 million for the FCC program in March 2020, but the agency ran out of money over the summer, approving its final set of COVID-19 funding applications on July 8, notes an FCC brief.

Now: The legislation adds "\$249,950,000 in additional funds for the COVID-19 Telehealth Program, of which \$50,000 shall be transferred by the Commission to the Inspector General of the Commission for oversight of the COVID-19 Telehealth Program," the law says.

Additionally, the law offers clarification on prior applications, state issues, evaluations, and future funding.

The FCC COVID-19 Telehealth Program logistics are in section 903 of the law and start on page 2,413.

Resource: Review all 5,593 pages of H.R. 133 at

<https://rules.house.gov/sites/democrats.rules.house.gov/files/BILLS-116HR133SA-RCP-116-68.pdf>.