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March 25, 2011

The Honorable Julius Genachowski
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Genachowski:

In a health care system increasingly reliant on medical technologies such as telemedicine and electronic health records, innovation is solely reliant on access to underlying broadband networks. I therefore write today to highlight the achievements of Oregon Health Network (OHN), arguably one of, if not the, most successful of the FCC Rural Health Care Program's 62 original pilot projects. OHN has embodied the original program's goal to improve access while demonstrating maximum use and efficiency.

Health providers, broadband availability, and incentives for competition are all scarce in rural America. Providers and patients in my rural district and others like it therefore serve to benefit the most from increased broadband and health IT innovation. Wallowa Memorial Hospital in the rural town of Enterprise, Oregon, for instance, recently utilized its partnership with OHN to establish a 10mbps connection, a speed far out of reach of many rural providers. As a result, the hospital will experience increased access to telemedicine, decreased turnaround time on imaging services, and a litany of other improvements all leading to the goal of improved patient quality and access.

Additionally, with medical training becoming increasingly reliant on the newest technologies, young professionals will therefore come to expect the same advances as they step into the workforce. Considering current health care workforce shortages, programs like OHN offer incentives to increase rural provider access and retain the current and future workforce.

For these reasons and others, I believe OHN's proven benefit to Oregon should serve as a model for success as the FCC perpetuates and develops methodologies for similar programs across the U.S. The program has embodied the original Pilot Program's goal to increase access to high quality health service and improve economic opportunities in Oregon, and I therefore request that the FCC allow OHN to maintain and expand upon its current momentum. OHN recently submitted a proposal to utilize an additional \$46.2 million of the Pilot Program's unobligated funds to serve an additional 100 Oregon health providers. I am confident this additional funding,

to be distributed in total over an eight-year period through 2019, would have a significant impact on providers and patient access in my district and state.

OHN has demonstrated its ability to truly address rural health provider broadband and technology shortages, and I am confident expanding its reach will amount to improved access and quality. I ask for your approval of OHN's request for additional Pilot Program funding.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Greg Walden". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Greg" and last name "Walden" clearly legible.

Greg Walden
Member of Congress

CC:

The Honorable Michael J. Copps, Commissioner, FCC
The Honorable Robert M. McDowell, Commissioner, FCC
The Honorable Mignon Clyburn, Commissioner, FCC
The Honorable Meredith Attwell Baker, Commissioner, FCC