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**FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION HIGHLIGHTS OREGON
IN ANNOUNCEMENT OF NATIONAL BROADBAND PLAN CHANGES**

[Oregon Health Network](#), which is building broadband infrastructure to connect rural and urban health providers, is cited by FCC to announce changes to the national broadband plan

(Portland, Ore.) – The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) announced yesterday it is making changes to the National Broadband Plan, which is designed to assist thousands of health providers at hospitals and clinics in the U.S. who lack adequate broadband access and capability.

Updates to the FCC’s [National Broadband Plan](#) include the development of a permanent \$400 million fund to further broadband infrastructure and build out of health information capabilities in rural areas. This financial support is an additional funding opportunity, outside of the current Rural Health Care Pilot Program (RHCPP) of which Oregon Health Network (OHN) manages for the state, and the standard Rural Health Care Program (RHC). Highlights of the proposed changes include:

- **Partner with public and nonprofit health care providers to invest millions in new regional and statewide broadband networks in parts of the country where it is unavailable or insufficient.** The new program will help build cost-effective broadband networks -- connecting doctors, hospitals and clinics -- designed to meet today’s health care needs.
- **Making broadband connectivity more affordable by sharing half of the monthly recurring network costs with hospitals, clinics and other health care providers.** This enhanced support for broadband connectivity will benefit patients served by thousands of public and nonprofit rural health care providers.
- **Delivering connectivity where it is needed most today,** including at skilled nursing facilities and renal dialysis centers, along with off-site administrative offices and data centers that perform support functions critical to health care networks.

As the fifth largest recipient of the FCC’s RHCPP, OHN has been actively working to draw down its \$20.2 million subsidy to bring high-speed broadband by June 30, 2011 to eligible nonprofit hospitals, clinics and community colleges through its statewide telehealth network. While the subsidy proved to be a big opportunity for Oregon, the state’s need for broadband has far exceeded OHN’s \$20.2 million award, and that more would have to be done to address the gap in coverage.

“This announcement from the FCC is great news for nonprofit Oregon providers who have not yet been able to participate in the RHCPP due to a variety of reasons, usually having to do with timing,” said [Kim](#)



[Lamb, Executive Director, Oregon Health Network.](#) “This new fund will now be there for them when they’re ready, to help them with the cost-prohibitive build-outs and monthly recurring costs associated with OHN-quality connectivity. Many providers are too busy and focused on other critical initiatives during these challenging times to invest in the RHCPP process.”

During the FCC announcement, Oregon’s RHCPP was highlighted as one of the successful examples in RHCPP’s in the nationwide program. Currently, 53 Oregon provider-vendor contracts have been signed; of those 35 Oregon provider-sites (hospitals, clinics and community colleges) have received their official funding commitment letters from the FCC. Of the 35, 26 are actively on the OHN network and being monitored by OHN’s network operations center.

“Beyond the fund, I am very encouraged with the FCC’s clear commitment and active efforts to improve the reach and use of reliable, high-quality broadband connectivity to and by health care providers,” said Lamb. “I have been particularly impressed with the FCC’s collaborative approach to better understand and gain insight from our nation’s leading innovators in health care, telemedicine and through pilot program leadership such as OHN to make sure the plan addresses what it should. This challenge is great, the problem complex, and as a result, will take active participation by all parties on all levels to solve. But I think this plan is a solid first step to do just that.”

OHN in Phase 1 is building and expanding its health care broadband infrastructure and is meeting the gaps of coverage in the state. The organization plans to bring on as many as 200 eligible hospitals, clinics, community colleges and government facilities in Oregon as a result of their \$20.2 million RHCPP subsidy to create the core footprint of the state’s first statewide telehealth network. In doing so, OHN hopes to provide a foundation for the future of digital health via a managed, reliable, high-speed, broadband network. Phase 2 will work to bring on for-profit providers such as radiology clinics, labs, pharmacies, long-term care facilities and general for-profit clinics. These participants are critical to the delivery of care in the state but who are too often left behind in receiving government support for their required broadband investments.

OHN provides its participants with reliable, high-speed, high quality, broadband connectivity for electronic medical records, radiological images, videoconferencing, and distance education applications which will expand the use of telemedicine and telehealth education in Oregon. The network also connects providers to each other, reducing the cost of health care in rural communities by minimizing duplicate efforts and time, obtaining correct patient information, procedure codes and referrals, and much more.

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About the Oregon Health Network

Oregon Health Network (OHN) administers a \$20.2 million Federal Communications Commission subsidy and more than \$3.8 million in state funding to create Oregon’s first state-wide broadband telehealth network. OHN is a nonprofit, member organization connecting and serving physicians, allied providers, clinics, health organizations, educators, students, government agencies, and businesses who are critical to improving the quality, access and delivery of health care to Oregonians. Please visit our [Website](#) for additional information.