

## **NEWS RELEASE**

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# **Governor improves access to healthcare and healthcare training in Oregon**

**\$500,000 grant helps establish the Oregon Health Network, a telecommunications project to connect health services throughout Oregon**

(Salem) – Oregon Governor Ted Kulongoski has announced a state grant of \$500,000 in matching funds to help establish the Oregon Health Network (OHN). The project will create a digital broadband “network of networks” to securely and privately interconnect Oregon hospitals and clinics for the provision of telehealth services as well as educational institutions for the training health care professionals.

“The Oregon Health Network will enhance Oregon’s healthcare system, from workforce training to actual service delivery,” said Governor Kulongoski. “This is a great partnership between federal, state and local governments, and the private sector, and takes a big step forward in improving the delivery of health care in Oregon.”

This grant enables Oregon to receive and benefit from a Federal Communications Commission Rural Health Care Pilot Program award of \$20,182,625. The FCC award, announced last November, will be used to pay for up to 85% of the total costs of constructing and using the telecommunications network over a period of three years.

Matching funds from the state, private foundations, healthcare systems, individual hospitals, community colleges and subscribers to the network services will cover 15% of the total cost over the three-year period.

The FCC award resulted from a collaborative effort by the Oregon Association of Hospital and Health Systems (OAHHS), the Telehealth Alliance of Oregon (TAO), hospitals, state and local government, universities, community colleges, and others.

The project is expected to result in:

- New broadband telecommunications infrastructure to support healthcare service delivery in Oregon
- New broadband telecommunications infrastructure to support healthcare education programs in Oregon
- Increased access to and utilization of high-capacity broadband telecommunications services by hospitals, clinics, and community colleges
- Improved access to high-quality health care services in rural Oregon
- Improved access to healthcare workforce training and degree programs in rural Oregon
- Reduced cost of delivering health care services in rural Oregon
- Increased number of healthcare professionals available to meet Oregon's expanding needs
- Improved foundation for economic development in Oregon's rural communities
- A model for health care education and service delivery that can be replicated in other states