

# National Broadband Plan Addresses Healthcare Issues

## A brief summary of recommendations that could affect those in the field

Contributed by Alan G. Fishel, partner at Arent Fox Attorneys at Law

As requested by Congress, on March 16, 2010, the Chairman of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) released a National Broadband Plan (the NBP). Chapter 10 of the NBP exclusively addresses health care issues, and includes several recommendations for the FCC (which it may adopt through rulemakings or otherwise), and a number of other recommendations for Congress or other agencies.

Below is a very brief summary of the most important recommendations in the NBP regarding health care, which could have significant implications for

hospitals, other health care providers, medical device manufactures and others in the health care field.

### Recommendations for action by the FCC in the NBP relating to health care

(Note: As to the first two bullet points below, the FCC will hold a rulemaking to decide whether to adopt these recommendations in the NBP)

- The FCC should establish a Health Care Broadband Infrastructure Fund to provide very significant subsidies to eligible health care providers for broadband network

deployment where existing networks are non-existent or unaffordable (this fund would replace the existing Internet Access Fund).

- The FCC should include in the list of eligible health care providers for the Health Care Broadband Infrastructure Fund, in addition to those public and non-profit health care providers that have been eligible for funding under the FCC's current (more limited) health-care related subsidy programs, the following as well: nursing facilities, long-term care facilities, dialysis

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# Active Participant Page Now on OHN Website

Our network is growing every week, with more than 30 active sites receiving their Funding Commitment Letter (FCL) or being monitored by our Network Operations Center.

We are excited to be able to share this information with you on our website: <http://www.oregonhealthnet.org/join/active>.

As each site moves through the FCC RHCPP process, we will update this page on a weekly basis. There is no better time to reach out to your OHN partners!

OHN continues to provide high-speed, high-quality technical network that we build together to support current and

future telemedicine applications. This critical milestone has been attained due to your participation and support of Oregon and the FCC's Rural Health Care Pilot Program.

Perhaps our greatest value is the network of people, organizations, communities, thought leadership and innovators that we hope to cultivate. These relationships will only help us continue to grow Oregon's first state-wide broadband telehealth network.

This is your network. Reach out now to form new partnerships and nurture the relationships you have. Together, we can continue to grow and reach all corners of the state.



*We are expanding! This graphic demonstrates the sites currently being monitored by our Network Operations Center (NOC).*

# Remembering Our Friend and Colleague, Nate Arbogast

## Champion of bringing broadband connectivity to rural community dies at 39

Contributed by Courtney Freitag, OHN Member Services Coordinator

For some, a job is much more than just a paycheck. To Nate Arbogast of WindWave Communications in Heppner, a goal to enrich educational experiences in his rural community was the backbone of his company.

**“The vision that drove Nate was providing high-speed bandwidth to every rural area school,” said Pat Lauritsen, general manager of WindWave Communications. “He hoped that ALL children had the same opportunities and tools to learn as the children in the metropolitan area schools.”**

Friends, family and colleagues continue to mourn Arbogast who died Feb. 28 in a skiing accident at Anthony Lakes Mountain Resort. A telecommunications partner to Oregon Health Network, Arbogast worked daily to bring broadband connectivity to the rural communities of Oregon and helped rural students learn and compete with larger schools.

**“He was well-loved and well-respected in his hometown,”** said Rod Burrows, director of engineering at C.A. Simon & Associates, Inc. in Vancouver, Wash. **“But I got to thinking the night of his funeral that most of his friends didn’t really know exactly what he had accomplished for the community over the past 10 years. They just knew he was always busy, and he was always juggling a dozen different projects associated with**

building some sort of fiber network.”

Burrows worked with Arbogast for the last decade bringing fiber optic connectivity to many hospitals and educational facilities.

Along with an unwavering work

ethic and dedication, there was a humbleness.

**“I don’t think that being a champion ever entered Nate’s mind, it was a passion and a vision that drove him. He was a very special person,”** Lauritsen said.

It seemed any time he walked into an office, Arbogast truly changed the energy into positive.

**“That was truly Nate. I will truly miss that attitude of his,”** said Hal Arbogast, Nate’s father. **“It is rather rare in the work place where a positive attitude many times is not maintained.”**

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— Pat Lauritsen, WindWave GM

Hal Arbogast describes his son, who was also his boss for four years, as a positive man with a repentive heart. He was eager to teach his craft to others to help spread his vision. Hal Arbogast received training from Nate his first day on the job and was **on his own the next. In fact, Nate’s** dedication to his work lasted right up until hours before his death.

**“I had spent the night before until 3 a.m. splicing fiber with Nate,”** Hal said. **“I will value that time spent with him forever.”**

**Arbogast’s high energy and drive kept him** always thinking ahead, often juggling several tasks and going in different directions. Along with a passion for education, he worked to bring high-speed bandwidth to rural medical facilities such as Wallowa Memorial Hospital in hopes of providing the same quality of service as patients receive in an urban medical facility.

Working alongside Arbogast for many years was co-worker Renn Morris.

**“He was just great,”** Morris said. **“You couldn’t have worked with a nicer guy.”** The two worked on hundreds of projects together throughout Eastern Oregon.

Arbogast worked tirelessly, often throughout the night, to splice fiber optics and get his team as excited as he was about the infinite possibilities of connectivity. The family and colleagues Arbogast left behind are working even harder to preserve the commitment and vision that Arbogast had.

A family man, Arbogast is survived by his wife Chandra and children Cade, 13, Kai, 12, and Cara, 10. An avid outdoorsmen, Arbogast loved skiing, hunting and golfing. He served as a deacon at Christian Life Center for many years.

**“Nate always took time for his children and their activities and was very active in his church and the youth programs,”** Lauritsen said. **The weekend of his death, Arbogast was chaperoning a youth ski trip.**

Burrows said there are plenty of accomplishments and lessons Arbogast taught his children. Namely, he proved you can dream big and ignore obstacles, such as lack of funding, as long as you have the drive to succeed and stay true to a vision.

**“He proved you can make things happen with your own enthusiasm, optimism, and your own hard work,”** Burrows said. **“And the best part of it is, like all really good dreams, it is open-ended.”**

*Memorial contributions for Nate Arbogast may be made to the Christian Life Center, P.O. Box 145, Heppner, OR 97836.*



# Participant Profile: PeaceHealth

## One of Oregon's top-ranked businesses joins OHN

Contributed by Courtney Freitag, Member Services Coordinator

Geriatric telemedicine, interpreter services and pediatric consultations are just some of the ways that PeaceHealth based in Springfield, Ore. is using their OHN connection. Rick Thies, lead network analyst for the organization, said the high-speed quality connection that started last month brings many new opportunities.

**"I have always viewed OHN as a medium for connecting medical facilities and providers with a high quality, broadband network to support providing more and better medical services to patients throughout the state," Thies said. "Especially in the more remote and smaller communities."**

With seven hospitals, medical groups and multiple programs and facilities, PeaceHealth is taking advantage of the advances in technology to provide several services to patients. The **organization's overarching vision is providing every patient with safe, evidence-based, compassionate care—every time, with every touch.**

To achieve this vision, PeaceHealth is creating a regional network of care, which is characterized by delivering coordinated, high quality and efficient care as close to where the patient lives **as possible, said Jackie Rice, PeaceHealth's Director of Strategy/Innovation/Development for the Oregon Region.**

**"OHN will provide some of the necessary infrastructure to link providers across the healthcare continuum," she said.**

And this is key to getting over the big challenge of limited access to healthcare. Whether it be due to loss of insurance coverage; insufficient income to pay for care; or difficulty finding a provider who will take Medicare or Medicaid, Rice believes the OHN connectivity will begin breaking down some of those barriers.

**"OHN and other IT infrastructure is vital to providing cost effective and high quality care to a growing number of people with increasingly complex health issues," she said.**

The organization has recently applied for grants to help improve health care quality and efficiency. A Beacon Grant proposal was

recently submitted for PeaceHealth's five-county area.

**PeaceHealth's Vice President and Chief Quality Officer Steve Gordon, MD said if his organization is a lucky recipient, it will really mean more for the surrounding communities.**

**"If we are fortunate to be successful, the effort will reflect a true community partnership," Gordon said. "The broadband infrastructure OHN provides will be invaluable in reaching more remote sites within our region with telemedicine and other services."**

Other services including video conference technology from Sacred Heart Medical Center in Eugene-Springfield. Thies said PeaceHealth was able to reach out to other locations in Springfield, Florence and Cottage Grove. Sacred Heart was also able to participate in a telemedicine pilot with Oregon Health and Sciences University (OHSU) in Portland in the area of Pediatric ICU consultations.

**PeaceHealth's vision to continually improve has been recognized. They were awarded one of the Top 100 Companies to Work For by Oregon Business Magazine and continually are acknowledged for their integration of information technology into clinical care. They have repeatedly being recognized as one of the 100 "most wired" health systems in the United States by the American Hospital Association.**

High on the list of priorities is using OHN for leveraging health information exchange and educational opportunities. Thies said there are various internal and external opportunities for PeaceHealth to provide video conferencing for remote nursing classes in cooperation with Southern Oregon Community College, Grand Rounds at Virginia Mason, and surgery lectures from OHSU.

The future is only full of opportunities for the organization with hopes of for-profit physician practices joining OHN.

**"It is when we have the specialists able to provide consultations via telemedicine that we will start seeing the full rewards of doing telehealth," he said.**



## PeaceHealth at a Glance

PeaceHealth employs 11,000 people throughout the northwest region and operates seven hospitals, medical groups, a chemical dependency program, health care joint ventures, and other services.

Operations include southeast Alaska, northwest Washington, southwest Washington, northwest Oregon, the Willamette Valley of Oregon, and Oregon's central coast.

OHN connects PeaceHealth with larger larger hospitals, clinics and education institutions. They are able to facilitate remote nursing classes with Southern Oregon Community College, have pediatric and geriatric consultations, and video conference from one location to another.

PeaceHealth has been recognized by Oregon Business Magazine as one of the Top 100 Places to Work, as well as one of the 100 "most wired" health systems in the U.S. by the American Hospital Association.



*PeaceHealth's hospital, Sacred Heart Medical Center in Springfield opened in August 2008. Ranked first in the West and fourth nationally for quality of care, PeaceHealth is a new participant of OHN.*

# National Broadband Plan Healthcare Recommendations, *continued*

*Continued from page 1*

- centers, off-site administrative offices of eligible health care providers, and data centers used for health care purposes and owned, directly or indirectly, by eligible health care providers.
- The FCC and the FDA should seek public input regarding, and then clarify, regulatory requirements and the approval process for converged communications and health care devices, including, for example, (i) mobile applications that help manage asthma, obesity or diabetes; (ii) Smartphone applications that display real time fetal heartbeat; (iii) i-phone applications that provides images for appendicitis diagnoses; and (iv) wireless patch-like sensors that transmit data over commercial wireless networks to health care providers.

*Recommendations in NBP for Congress and Other Agencies*

- Congress should consider expanding

definition of health care providers eligible for universal service to include for-profit entities, such as those that serve particularly vulnerable populations.

- HHS should (i) identify e-care applications whose use could be immediately incented through outcomes-based reimbursement, (ii) when testing new payment models, include e-care applications and evaluate their impact on the models; and (iii) for new e-care applications, HHS should support further pilots and testing that review their suitability for reimbursement.
- In the near term, CMS should seek means for reimbursing for e-care technologies, in certain instances, under current fee for service models for physicians Medical Advantage plans, and Home Health Agencies.
- Congress, states and CMS should reduce regulatory barriers that inhibit

Health IT solutions, including with respect to (i) credentialing and privileges; (ii) state licensing requirements; and (iii) e-prescriptions.

- With respect to health care data, (i) the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology should establish common standards and protocols for sharing data, and provide incentives for their use; and (ii) Congress should require that consumers be allowed to have, at reasonable cost, access to and control over all their digital health care data in machine-readable form.
- Congress should consider authorizing funds for the Indian Health Service for the purpose of upgrading its broadband service.

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## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

The Oregon Health Network is working very hard to get as many sites posted for RFP as possible over the next couple of months. We anticipate some 130 sites to come out for bid in the next 3 RFPs. That being said, our pool of volunteer RFP reviewers is beginning to dwindle. We would greatly appreciate any volunteers with a technical background to assist us in reviewing the vendor bids and helping to shape the future of the OHN Network. The review generally lasts two weeks and we provide thorough instruction on all facets of the RFP review process. Most reviews will take between 3-5 hours of your time, depending on your level of technical expertise and how many sites you would like to review for. If you have any interest in participating or if you would just like to learn more, please contact Peter Trnavskis, our IT Project Manager, via email at [ptrnavskis@oregonhealthnet.org](mailto:ptrnavskis@oregonhealthnet.org).

## UPCOMING

# Industry Events



### MAY 5-7 OREGON ASSOCIATION OF HOSPITALS AND HEALTH SYSTEMS

*Small and Rural Hospital Summit (Salem Convention Center). Visit [www.oahhs.org](http://www.oahhs.org) for more information.*

### MAY 16-18 AMERICAN TELEHEALTH ASSOCIATION

OHN staff attending

*International Annual Meeting (San Antonio, Texas). Visit [www.americantelemed.org](http://www.americantelemed.org) for more information.*

*If your organization has an upcoming event, please let us know! Email the details to [cfreitag@oregonhealthnet.org](mailto:cfreitag@oregonhealthnet.org).*