

Utah ARCHES

Advancing Rural Connections for Healthcare and E-health Services

**Proposal to the Federal Communications Commission
Rural Health Care Pilot Program
Approved 11/19/2007**





Rural Health Care Pilot Program

Existing Universal Service Program

Based on 1996 Telecommunications Act

E-rate program for Schools & Libraries

- \$1.2 billion per year, fully utilized each year

Rural Health Care Program

- \$400 million annual budget
- Only \$40 million utilized per year, \$25 million of which is spent in Alaska

The FCC is interested in seeking innovative strategies to improve utilization of the Rural Health Care Program.



Rural Health Care Pilot Program

FCC Order 9/26/2006

The FCC initiated the pilot program to facilitate the creation of a nationwide broadband network dedicated to health care, connecting public and private non-profit health care providers in rural and urban locations.

Intended to:

- Build state and regional broadband networks for healthcare.
- Connect into a nationwide healthcare backbone
- Provide infrastructure to support telehealth and telemedicine services throughout the nation.
- Fund 85% of non-recurring and recurring network costs.



Rural Health Care Pilot Program

FCC Order 11/19/2007

- Awarded \$417 million for the construction of 69 statewide or regional broadband telehealth networks in 42 states and 3 U.S. territories.
- Utah has been awarded \$9,045,959, 85% of total proposed project cost of \$10,642,305.
- Project timeline: 7/1/2007-6/30/2010, with a potential extension until 2013 or 2014.



Rural Health Care Pilot Program

Eligible facilities

- Rural, suburban, and urban facilities
- Health care providers, defined as:
 - post secondary educational institutions offering health care instruction, teaching hospitals, and medical schools;
 - community health centers; migrant health care centers
 - local health departments or agencies;
 - community mental health centers;
 - non-for-profit hospitals;
 - rural health clinics;
 - consortia of one or more above entities
- **For-profit** health care providers are **ineligible** for funding but **must be allowed to connect** into the network “at a fair price”.



Rural Health Care Pilot Program

Eligible costs

- Limited to advanced telecommunications and information services, including non-recurring and recurring costs for telecommunications

Ineligible costs

- Everything else!

15% match must meet same funding guidelines as 85%.

No guaranteed ongoing support once project is completed.



Rural Health Care Pilot Program

New requirements: where feasible, selected participants shall:

1. Use health IT products that meet interoperability standards recognized by the HHS Secretary.
2. Use health IT products certified by the Certification Commission for Healthcare Information Technology.
3. Support the NHIN architecture by coordinating activities with the organizations performing NHIN trial implementations.
4. Use resources available at HHS's AHRQ National Resource Center for Health Information Technology.
5. Educate themselves concerning the Pandemic and All Hazards Preparedness Act and coordinate with the HHS Assistant Secretary for Public Response as a resource for telehealth inventory and for the implementation of other preparedness and response initiatives.
6. Use resources available through CDC PHIN to facilitate interoperability with public health and emergency organizations.
7. Coordinate use of their networks with HHS, including CDC and other public health officials, during public health emergencies.



Rural Health Care Pilot Program

FCC

- Initiated the project, approved the rules, and selected participants.
- Orders and all applications can be found at their website:
<http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/rural/rhcp.html>

Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC)

- Rural Health Care Division (RHC) is responsible for administration of the program.
- Implementation details and FAQs are (or will be) available at their website:
<http://www.usac.org/rhc-pilot-program>

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Project Purpose

Improve the quality of healthcare for the citizens of Utah by building upon existing IT infrastructure and increasing broadband capacity in order to advance innovative e-health services.

Project Goals

1. Foster collaboration between health networks and organizations within the state and region.
2. Expand telehealth and telemedicine services throughout rural Utah.
3. Facilitate the adoption of Health Information Technology (HIT) in rural Utah.
4. Increase educational opportunities for health care providers in their communities.

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Technical Implementation Strategies

- 1. Re-design the existing IT infrastructure to create an expanded, scalable statewide healthcare network.**
- 2. Increase broadband capacity to rural health care facilities.**
- 3. Increase network reliability to support critical patient care applications.**
- 4. Integrate Utah's health networks and resources into a unified infrastructure.**
- 5. Maintain network efficiency and network security through coordinated management among partners.**

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Basic network design

1. **Begin the migration from T1 to dedicated Ethernet technology**

T1 = 1.54 mbps

Ethernet =

5 mbps

10 mbps

100 mbps

1,000 mbps = 1 gigabit per second

2. **Build network core with regional aggregation points where healthcare facilities may connect into the network.**
3. **Connect to Internet2, a dedicated nationwide Internet backbone.**

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Sites

- **Budgeted for 80 sites**
- **Actual number will be based on actual costs**

Phase 1: Early adopters (in general)

- **Intermountain Healthcare facilities**
- **Utah Navajo Health System**
- **UTN hospitals**

Phase 2: Specific sites to be identified

- **Will depend on interest, need, and actual costs.**
- **Need to address the fact that there is no guarantee of ongoing support upon completion of the pilot.**

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Lead Organizations and Key Partners

- **University of Utah, on behalf of the Utah Telehealth Network,** will be legally and financially responsible for the conduct of project activities.
- **Intermountain Healthcare** will share leadership of the project.
- **Utah Navajo Health System**
- **The Central Utah Clinic**
- **Utah Hospitals and Health Systems Association (UHA)**
- **Association for Utah Community Health (AUCH)**
- **Utah Association of Local Health Officers**
- **Utah Department of Health**
- **Utah Department of Technology Services**
- **Utah Education Network**

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Project management

Project oversight:

- **Utah Telehealth Network Advisory Board**

Co-managers:

- **Deb LaMarche, Program Manager,
Utah Telehealth Network**
- **Kyle Andersen, Enterprise Communications,
Intermountain Healthcare**

Management team:

- **Representatives of key partners**

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First steps

- **Communicate opportunities to Utah's healthcare community**
- **Get clarification from USAC regarding project implementation details**
- **Convene the management team**
- **Pursue match funding**
- **Conduct a competitive bidding process to determine actual costs and select service provider(s).**

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***...a complex challenge,
and a tremendous opportunity!***

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