

FCC Waives Rules to Facilitate Telehealth and Remote Learning During Coronavirus Pandemic

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On March 18, 2020, the Federal Communications Commission (“Commission” or “FCC”) released an order waiving gift and contribution rules applicable to two Universal Service Fund (“USF”) initiatives: the Rural Health Care program (“RHC”), and the schools and libraries universal support program (“E-rate”). The Commission predicated its decision on the evolving coronavirus, or COVID-19, pandemic, as schools close and transition to remote learning, and medical practitioners utilize telehealth to diagnose and treat patients. According to Chairman Pai, these waivers will allow “service providers the chance to step up and give health care providers more tools to fight the ongoing pandemic and serve patients more effectively” and will assist schools and libraries in “bridg[ing] the digital divide during the coronavirus pandemic.”