FCC Implements $100 Million Connected Care Pilot Program and $200 Million COVID-19 Telehealth Program

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On April 2, 2020, the Federal Communications Commission ("Commission" or "FCC") released its *Promoting Telehealth for Low-Income Consumers* and *COVID-19 Telehealth Program* Report and Order ("*Order").* The *Order* implements a three-year, $100 million Connected Care Pilot Program ("Pilot"), originally announced in August 2019, that will provide selected telehealth pilot programs with an 85% discount on "broadband connectivity, network equipment, and information services necessary to provide connected care services."

The *Order* also establishes a COVID-19 Telehealth Program ("CTP") to ensure access to connected care services and devices, pursuant to a $200 million emergency appropriation under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act ("CARES Act"). This constitutes a vital weapon in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic; as Chairman Pai remarked, "[c]onnected care can help us treat coronavirus patients, enable patients with other conditions to get care while maintaining social distancing, and protect health care professionals from greater exposure."

This program provides significant new sources of funding for health care providers and communications service providers seeking to expand their offerings in the rapidly growing telehealth sector. The combined programs will have ramifications for the health care and communications industries that will extend far beyond the current COVID-19 crisis.

Attorney

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