

April 10, 2020

Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Commissioner Carr and Colleagues,

On behalf of the MUSC Center for Telehealth, thank you for taking steps to expeditiously approve and implement the *Connected Care Pilot Program* and *COVID-19 Telehealth Program* following the recent passage of the CARES Act. As the leading academic health center in a state with a large rural and underserved population, we are extremely supportive of these programs, which will enhance telehealth delivery and protect access to high-quality healthcare during the COVID-19 emergency period and beyond.

The *Connected Care Pilot* will support telecommunications, broadband connectivity, and access to devices to allow providers to reach more patients through telehealth. At MUSC, we have seen firsthand through our telehealth initiatives the impact advanced broadband technology has on meeting critical healthcare needs in rural and underserved communities. This Program will improve access by making more providers available, offering more efficient and effective care quickly in more places, and generating innovative solutions to improve health equity.

As with so many health systems and practitioners nationwide, telehealth is an essential component of MUSC's COVID-19 preparedness and response efforts. Telehealth is being utilized to preserve public health in our community, allowing practitioners to slow the spread of the virus; provide high-quality care to those infected with the disease; and protect vulnerable patients and access to other types of critical care. Broad utilization of telehealth services also decreases potential exposure for healthcare workers on the front lines and helps alleviate overburdening of our healthcare infrastructure. At MUSC, we are working to transition as much care to virtual platforms as possible, including:

- **Virtual Urgent Care Screenings** – Keeping patients away from unnecessary healthcare provider contact, screening patients for COVID-19, and triaging patients at high risk of being positive to local testing.
- **Remote Patient Monitoring** – Monitoring of all COVID-19 positive patients in home for early detection of needing transport to local emergency services; scaling remote patient monitoring of high risk diabetic and hypertensive patients to ensure effective chronic disease management when not connected to primary care.
- **Ambulatory Video Visits** – Converting outpatient care to virtual visits when and where possible to get patients the essential care they need while social isolating and without overburdening the health care system.
- **Inpatient Video Monitoring** – Using video monitoring equipment to minimize healthcare worker exposure in management of COVID-19 positive patients as well as to conserve Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

The *COVID-19 Telehealth* and *Connected Care Pilot Programs* will help our Center and others around the country reach more patients through telehealth, while managing increasing demands on the healthcare workforce as a result of the COVID-19 crisis. Both programs will have lasting effects beyond the pandemic, improving access, cutting costs, and fostering innovation in health care delivery. These programs will allow us to build on our successes and collect data that inform future policies to facilitate connected care.

Respectfully,



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