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For Immediate Release**FCC Now Voting On Carr's Connected Care Pilot Program*****FCC Fast-Tracked Carr's Telehealth Initiative to Support Nation's COVID-19 Response***

WASHINGTON, March 30, 2020—Today, FCC Chairman Ajit Pai circulated an Order to the Commission that would stand up Commissioner Carr's \$100 million Connected Care Pilot Program plus an emergency \$200 million COVID-19 Telehealth Program. Expanding telehealth is one of several initiatives the FCC has advanced recently under Chairman Pai's leadership to keep Americans connected during the coronavirus pandemic. Commissioner Carr has already voted to approve the Order, and he looks forward to the full Commission voting on the proposal as soon as possible.

If adopted, the Connected Care Pilot Program would make \$100 million available for healthcare providers to offer telehealth services to patients located at home or anywhere outside the confines of a healthcare facility. "This important initiative is the healthcare equivalent of shifting from Blockbuster to Netflix," Commissioner Carr stated. "With smartphones, tablets, and connected healthcare devices, patients no longer need to visit brick-and-mortar facilities or meet in person with a doctor to receive high-quality care," he added.

"Supporting this trend in telehealth is more important than ever before: Many healthcare facilities are at capacity responding to COVID-19 and Americans are staying home in large numbers to maintain social distancing," Carr said. "So the FCC's new Connected Care initiative can ensure that Americans receive quality care while maintaining physical separation. It can be used to treat a wide range of health conditions—from managing pandemic response, opioid dependency, diabetes, heart disease, mental health conditions, and high-risk pregnancy." This \$100 million initiative would be funded out of the FCC's existing Universal Service Fund and focus on low-income Americans and veterans.

"The emergency COVID-19 Telehealth Program would fast-track an additional \$200 million that Congress recently appropriated in the CARES Act. The funding will support telehealth in areas already hit hard by the coronavirus pandemic. While health care providers can use this funding to treat COVID-19 patients through connected care technologies, they can also use these funds and telehealth technologies to treat other patients and conditions as part of their efforts to free up hospital space and resources for COVID-19 patients."

Commissioner Carr has been leading the FCC's efforts to develop the Connected Care Pilot program over the past two years. Carr has met with health care providers in their own communities—from Alaska to South Dakota to Mississippi—to inform the FCC's initiative. As part of that work, Carr has coordinated the FCC's new telehealth initiative with officials at the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and other agencies. The FCC's Order benefited greatly from that coordination.

On the announcement that Chairman Pai has circulated the Order to the Commission for a vote, Carr said, “I am grateful to Chairman Pai for his leadership in accelerating this important initiative and fast-tracking a COVID-19 Telehealth Program. This builds on the important steps the FCC has taken over the recent days and weeks to ensure all Americans—including low-income households—stay connected at this important moment.”

“The two telehealth initiatives have the chance to simultaneously improve the lives of countless Americans, while reducing strain on overburdened health care systems,” Carr stated.

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