

## **FCC SEEKS COMMENT ON EXPANDING THE SCOPE OF HEALTHCARE CONNECT FUND TO INCLUDE URBAN EMPLOYED PHYSICIAN OFFICES AND OTHER “URBAN HEALTH CLINICS”**

The FCC has **opened the comment period** on three Rural Health Care Program participants' appeals of Universal Service Administrative Company decisions denying Healthcare Connect Fund ("HCF") support for Illinois Rural HealthNet, Colorado Telehealth Network and Oregon Health Network (see **our previous blog post on the subject**). At issue is whether health care provider service locations that are urban, but are not licensed bed hospitals (or other eligible entities), are eligible locations under the HCF. The locations at issue primarily consist of employed physician offices. Comments are due December 20, 2013, and reply comments are due January 3, 2014.

The HCF subsidizes 65% of the cost of broadband connections for networks of rural and urban providers to encourage the deployment of advanced technologies, including telehealth and telemedicine. The Universal Service Fund has traditionally funded only rural locations serving the health care needs of the rural population. With the commencement of the HCF this year, the FCC recognized the importance of connecting the entire continuum of care from the rural clinic to the level one trauma center and specialists in the urban environment. In order to include urban employed physician offices and other urban health clinics, the FCC needs testimony supporting the inclusion of these locations in the scope of available funding. Such testimony should explain that telemedicine terminals are located in non-acute care settings (i.e., locations other than licensed bed facilities) and explain the broad array of facilities that constitute the metro medical center in addition to the licensed bed facility.

Hall Render is coordinating comments by interested parties, which are due December 20, 2013. If you have questions on these appeals, the scope of the HCF or need assistance with your HCF application, please contact Michael T. Batt at 317.977.1417 or [mbatt@hallrender.com](mailto:mbatt@hallrender.com), William Dummett at 317.977.1427 or [wdummett@hallrender.com](mailto:wdummett@hallrender.com) or your regular Hall Render attorney.