



For Immediate Release

INCOMPAS Urges FCC to Bring Competition to Rural Health Care Program

WASHINGTON, DC (March 6, 2018) – Yesterday, INCOMPAS, the Internet and competitive networks association, filed reply comments in a proceeding at the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) that seeks input on reforms to the agency’s Rural Health Care (RHC) Program.

Demand for the RHC Program has exceeded the \$400 million cap for the second year in a row, and the Commission has opened this proceeding seeking ways to promote efficiencies in the administration and oversight of the program.

In its reply comments, INCOMPAS urges the Commission to take additional steps to enable competition in the program, in order to control program costs and ensure that reliable and innovative telecommunications services are available to the nation’s rural healthcare providers.

INCOMPAS explains that the FCC can encourage competition through measures that promote transparency in the bidding process, streamline the application and administration of the program to encourage new service providers to participate in the program, and by allowing health care providers to continue to factor reliability and service quality into the agency’s standards on cost-effectiveness.

Read INCOMPAS’ Reply Comments here: <http://www.incompas.org/Files/filings/2018/03-05-18%20INCOMPAS%20Reply%20Comments%20-%20Rural%20Telehealth.pdf>

Additionally, INCOMPAS CEO Chip Pickering released the following statement in response:

“President Trump has repeatedly cited his desire to bring competition to insurance, to education, and to the health care market. A great venue for this is the Rural Health Care Program. Enhancing a competitive bidding process for providers in the RHC will bring a market-based approach to this critical program that will be far more efficient than any rate-setting process conducted by the Commission or the program’s administrator, the Universal Service Administrative Company.

“Without a plan to bring more competition to rural telehealth, millions of Americans living in the heartland will be at risk of losing essential services that save lives. Bringing transparency to and streamlining the bidding and application process will ensure it’s not just the biggest companies who participate in the program, but the companies able to offer the most competitive services and prices.”

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About INCOMPAS

INCOMPAS, the Internet and competitive networks association, is the leading trade group advocating for competition policy across all networks. INCOMPAS represents Internet, streaming, communications and technology companies large and small, advocating for laws and policies that

promote competition, innovation and economic development. Learn more at www.incompas.org or follow us on Twitter: @INCOMPAS @ChipPickering