Improving Rural Healthcare with Broadband and Telehealth

June 10, 2019
12:30 – 1:30 p.m.

@SHLBCoalition
www.shlb.org
John Windhausen Jr.

Executive Director

SHLB Coalition

202-261-6599

jwindhausen@shlb.org
Kristi Walker
Senior Project Manager
Community Care of West Virginia
www.communitycarewv.org
Universal Service Administrative Co.

Kristi Walker
Who Are We

• Federally Qualified Health Center
• 15 Health Centers
• 46 School Based Health Centers
• 1 Dental Clinic
• 1 Pain Management Center
Where We Serve
Who We Serve

• 41,673 Patients
• 2,220 Uninsured
• 14,595 Medicaid
• 1,696 Dual Eligible Medicaid/ Medicare
• 6,784 Medicare
• 798 Other Public Insurance
2016 Network
Current Network Circuit Detail

• Six 1Gbps Circuits
• Fourteen 100 Mbps
• One 20 Mbps
• Fifty-two 10Mbps
• Total Cost per month= $203,568.04
• Annual Cost= $2,442,816.48
USAC Funding Approval 2017

- Funding Requests Filed June 20-25, 2017
- Began receiving information requests – October 5, 2017
- Initial Funding Approvals Received - March 16, 2018
- Total Funding for 2017 for 58 Circuits = $1,119,378.09

- One 1 Gbps Circuit still under review
2018

• Funding requests submitted June 29, 2018
• 1st Request for Information received January 20, 2019
• 110 Requests received through the portal.
• 6 different reviewers
• Different information requested for identical services.
• Began receiving funding approvals with higher urban rates - May 17, 2019
Urban Rate

• CCWV submitted Urban Rates from Lumos
• Lumos merged with another company to form Segra
• No rates are on Segra’s new website
• CCWV provided a letter from Segra confirming the rates were accurate when filed and are still accurate also provided phone numbers to call for verification
• USAC has rejected that letter and the Lumos Rates.
• The unbudgeted cost increase as a direct result will be $395,165.
Urban Rate

“If a rural health care provider requests an eligible service to be provided over a distance that is greater than the “standard urban distance,” for the state in which it is located, the urban rate for that service shall be no higher than the highest tariffed or publically-available rate charged to a commercial customer for a functionally similar service provided over the standard urban distance in any city with a population of 50,000 or more in that state, calculated as if the service were provided between two points within the city.”

WV does not have a city with over 50,000 in population.

Phone call is a publically available outlet to gain information.
Urban Rate

DA-19-92 Public Notice-

“publicly available rates include, but are not limited to, those posted on a rate card on a service provider’s website or accessible via a public database.”

While this Public Notice pertains to Rural Rates it is the only guidance available.
Result

• CCWV has decided not to open 3 new school based health centers
• Reviewing service delivery locations to determine what other locations can be closed or services that can be cut.
Action Requested

- Review program requirements and update program language through legislation to align with current laws.
- Federal Communication Commission
  - Clarify acceptable program documentation and rules
  - Simplify the application and review process
  - Provide training for low level reviewers
Contact Information

Kristi Walker
Senior Project Manager
Kristi.walker@ccwv.org
(304) 881-1190

Rick Simon
Chief Executive Officer
Rick.simon@ccwv.org
(304) 924-6262 ext. 1033
Brian Doerr
SVP, Information Technology
Community Hospital Corporation

Brian has been with CHC for 11 years and is responsible for the development of all IT, security, privacy, credit card processing, and telecom related programs for CHC hospital clients.

Whittney Walker
Director, Telecom Funding
Community Hospital Corporation

Whittney has been with CHC for 4 years and is responsible for the development of all telecom service and consulting programs for CHC hospital clients.
Community Hospital Corporation (CHC) is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) support organization founded in 1996.

CHC owns, manages and consults with hospitals across the country.

**CHC mission** – To guide, support and enhance the mission of community hospitals and healthcare providers
CHC USAC program

- 340 Healthcare Providers (HCPs)
- 26 states
- 1,125 services
- $11.6 million in funding requested
- $600k annual expense reduction through negotiation
Yoakum Community Hospital - Yoakum, TX

Yoakum Community Hospital is a 25-bed Critical Access Hospital that has served the 5,800 people in Yoakum, as well as surrounding areas, for 90 years. 85% of Yoakum’s patients use Medicaid. In early 2018, Yoakum closed its OB department due to financial struggles.

Projects enabled by USAC funding:
- Remote real-time imaging services
- Remote office visit telemedicine program

Program challenges
- Denials due to service provider non-response to USAC
Jellico Community Hospital is a 54-bed acute care facility providing quality healthcare since 1974.

20% of area families have incomes below the poverty level and 68% use Medicare or Medicaid. Topography creates significant challenges for physicians and patients.

Due to financial stress, the hospital was recently sold, thereby avoiding closure.

Projects enabled by USAC funding:

- Remote clinic broadband and telephone in Williamsburg, Ky.
- Remote patient monitoring by remote physicians
- Reduction in technology expenses leveraging cloud hosted inpatient and clinic EMRs
RHC Administrative Challenges

- Initial filing window narrowed for past three years
- Increasing administrative burdens
  - Rural and urban rate documentation requirements
  - PQA requests are initiated during peak filing deadlines
- Delayed form processing
  - Average HCF eligibility review for 2019 was 22 days
  - Form 461 without RFP took up to 14 days to post
  - Funding delays
- Lack of telecommunications knowledge by USAC analysts
  - Increased information requests, often repetitive
  - Funding denials
    - Undue hardships placed upon participating HCPs
    - Lengthy appeals process
Thank you.
Federally Qualified Community Health Center
Patient Centered Medical Home
Medical – Dental – Behavioral Health
Only Non-IHS Provider in Region
Size: Approximately 50,000 Sq. Miles
We would be the 29th largest state (About the size of Alabama)

Population:
Approx. 27,000
85% Alaska Native

Per Capita Income
YK Delta: $16,054
Alaska: $34,191
US Average: $29,829
Nic Powers
CEO
Winding Waters Community Health Center
www.windingwaters.org
Jeff Mitchell
Attorney
Fletcher, Heald & Hildreth
www.fhhlaw.com
Thank you

www.shlb.org | @SHLBCoalition