



THE EUREKA REPORTER

California Receives Federal Grant For Rural Health Care

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At its annual conference Tuesday and Wednesday, the California State Rural Health Association discussed a \$22 million federal grant the Federal Communications Commission awarded to California for the improvement of rural health care through expansion of telemedicine technology.

The grant was awarded to the California Telehealth Network, a coalition led by the University of California, in partnership with government agencies and health care providers, including the California State Rural Healthcare Association, according to a news release from Sen. Patricia Wiggins' office.

The group will work together to bring modern health care services to rural, underserved areas of California.

Telehealth and telemedicine services provide patients in rural areas with access to critically needed medical specialists in urban areas through video conferencing. With this new technology, urban doctors can monitor patients, make diagnoses and assist in treating patients in rural areas from long distances.

As members of the California Legislative Rural Caucus, Wiggins (D-Santa Rosa) and Assemblymember Patty Berg (D-Eureka) actively supported the California Telehealth Network's grant application by working with Congress and contacting the FCC to ensure California received its share of the federal funding, the release stated.

The two legislators say they were pleased by the news of the award.

"This federal grant will help us to expand broadband networks for telemedicine, which will enable us to connect medical experts to clinics in some of the most remote regions of California," Berg said.

Wiggins agreed, saying that "it is critical that our state sets the standard with this new technology, which will enable us to save time, save money and, most importantly, save lives."

Rural Caucus Chairperson Jean Fuller (R-Bakersfield) commended Wiggins and Berg for their work on behalf of rural Californians, noting, "I have been very impressed how the members of the Rural Caucus pulled together to fight for this funding. The senator and Assembly member have been tireless advocates for this important grant. I am grateful to have them as members of our team."

The \$22 million grant award comes on top of the \$200 million allocated in Proposition 1D to build telemedicine capacity around the state. The award will build upon existing networks and connect approximately 300 health care providers that are currently unconnected to telemedicine services.

Grant awardees:

Year 1:

K'ima:w Medical Center Clinic, Hoopa Reservation
Jerold Phelps Community Hospital, Garberville
Redwood Memorial Hospital, Fortuna
St. Joseph Hospital, Eureka
Telehealth and Visiting Specialist Center, Eureka
United Indian Health Service, Arcata
Yuki Trails, Covelo
St. Helena Hospital, St. Helena
Sonoma Valley Hospital, Sonoma

Year 2:

Eureka Community Health Center, Eureka
The General Hospital, Eureka
Humboldt Open Door Clinic, Arcata
K:ima:w Medical Center, Hoopa Reservation
Mad River Community Hospital, Arcata
Sutter Lakeside Hospital, Lakeport
Sonoma County Indian Health, Santa Rosa
Mendocino Coast Clinics, Fort Bragg
Potter Valley Community Health Center, Potter Valley
Redwood Coast Medical Services, Gualala
Round Valley Indian Health Center, Covelo

Year 3:

Eureka Community Health Center, Burre Dental Center, Eureka
McKinleyville Community Health Center, McKinleyville
Mobile Medical Office, Eureka
Second Mobile Unit, Eureka
Six Rivers Planned Parenthood, Eureka
Lake County Tribal Health Consortium, Lakeport
Mendocino Community Health Clinic, Lakeport
Consolidated Tribal Health Project, Redwood Valley
Long Valley Health Center, Laytonville
Long Valley Health Center Dental Clinic, Laytonville
Mendocino Coast Clinics, Fort Bragg
Mendocino Community Health Clinic, Little Lake Clinic, Willits
Mendocino Community Health Clinic, Ukiah
Sonoma Valley Community Health Center, Sonoma

(The California Legislative Rural Caucus is a bipartisan group created to protect and promote rural California and its interests. It comprises 45 members from the California State Assembly and Senate that represent rural areas throughout California.)