

June 10, 2020

To Whom It May Concern;

Okanogan County Public Hospital District No. 3, dba Mid Valley Hospital, fully supports the proposed rural health bill creating a pilot grant program within HRSA. Designed to increase the use of remote patient monitoring in rural areas during the COVID-19 crisis and hopefully beyond this pandemic, this is the future of providing services in remote rural counties throughout the United States.

Mid Valley Hospital, is a team of dedicated, caring professionals committed to providing optimal quality health care services while striving to meet the needs of our community through the sensitive and efficient utilization of resources and continuing performance improvement efforts. Opening in 1963 here in Omak, Washington, we continue to serve our community after more than 50 years. There are approximately 41,241 residents living in Okanogan County with 48 percent of residents living at or below 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Guidelines.¹ The County covers 5,281 square miles making it difficult for many to travel long distances for necessary health care needs. Patients throughout the county rely heavily on the services provided by rural healthcare providers like ourselves.

Despite having three hospitals and several medical clinics spread out throughout the county, there continue to be significant gaps in care in our vast and rural region where people are bound by high poverty, extreme weather conditions, and lack of public transportation. Noting imitations to high-speed broadband we agree with facilitating the use of remote patient monitoring technology that is an FDA-cleared, and cellular-enabled to operate at lower frequency levels to facilitate adoption in rural areas without broadband access. This will enhance the capability of providing these services to rural residents and avoiding critical delays in care by enhancing telehealth access.

We thank Congressman Newhouse for his foresight and leadership in assisting with providing innovative rural health care opportunities for all citizens.

Sincerely,



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¹ 2014, 5-year ACS Estimate, United States Census Bureau