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August 19, 2008

Dear Health Care Provider:

**Importance of this letter.** This letter is an offer for your organization to participate in a Federal Communications Commission (FCC)-funded project supported by Governor Granholm, Michigan's Congressional delegation, the Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH), the Michigan Department of Information Technology (MDIT), and health care leaders throughout Michigan. The project is called the Rural Health Care Pilot Program (RHCPP). If you want to confirm the importance of this communication to your organization, please contact one of the references listed on the project's website:

<http://fcc.mphi.org/contacts.html> .

**Benefit to you.** In November 2007, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) awarded \$21 million to the Michigan Public Health Institute (MPHI) to build a dedicated broadband network linking Michigan's rural health care facilities. In October 2008, MPHI plans to issue an RFP (request for proposal) to construct the network. MPHI would like to include as many *eligible* (non-profit or publicly owned) health care facilities as possible. In addition to creating a dedicated broadband network linking health care facilities throughout the State, the project will link the facilities to both the public Internet and the research-based Internet2 network and pay for the network-dedicated hardware required at each site (e.g., router and virtual private network [VPN] equipment). The project will pay for most of the network's construction and first-year operating costs. Finally, the project will negotiate long-term rates to keep the monthly, ongoing cost of using the network as low as possible. The following types of health care facilities are eligible:

- Not-for-profit hospitals, teaching hospitals, and medical schools
- Dedicated emergency departments of rural, for-profit hospitals that participate in Medicare
- Community health centers, including mental health centers
- Rural health clinics, including mobile clinics
- Federally-designated rural health clinics or federally-qualified health clinics
- Health centers providing health care to migrants
- Local health departments or agencies

Smaller satellite sites operated by major health care facilities are also eligible, as long as they help provide health care. For example, a satellite health clinic operated by a Health Department would be eligible; a water treatment plant operated by that same Department would not. The technical specifications of the network access available to you are provided on our website (referenced below).

**Cost.** There *will* be a cost to your facility. The FCC will pay for 85 percent of network construction and first-year operating costs. The remaining 15 percent is currently the responsibility of the site. However, MPHI is soliciting grants to cover the remaining 15 percent. *At most*, each facility will have to pay for 15 percent of its share of network construction costs and 15 percent of its share of first-year network operating costs. After the first year, each facility will be responsible for 100 percent of its share of network operating costs, but the project has been designed to minimize those ongoing costs. The specifics of the costs to your facility will be available for your review *after* a vendor is selected in late 2008 or early 2009. You may withdraw from the project at that time if the projected costs are not acceptable.

**LOA requirement.** To participate, each facility must sign a Letter of Agency (an LOA authorizes MPHI to negotiate on the facility's behalf) and submit the LOA to MPHI no later than September 17, 2008. The LOA enables MPHI to add a facility to the RFP so it can be included in the network construction phase of the project. However, a facility may opt out of participation before the contract is signed. In addition, once the network is constructed, a facility may terminate its participation at any time *after* the first year of network operation. This LOA process has been mandated by the FCC and its administrative arm. We think the benefits of the program are compelling, and signing an LOA does not irrevocably commit a facility to participation.

**Summary.** This project offers your facility the opportunity to link to a dedicated, statewide, high-speed health care network at a low cost and without a long-term commitment. It offers you the opportunity to complement your existing telecommunications infrastructure (or build one) with minimal impact on your budget. If the network does not meet your needs, if technological advances offer better alternatives, or if for any reason you cannot afford to continue to participate, you may opt out any time after the twelfth month of network operation.

**What we need from you, and the deadline.** If you are interested in participating, we need two items from you no later than the close-of-business on September 17:

- A Letter of Agency enabling your facility and any subsidiary sites to participate in the network. LOA templates (one for non-profits and one for for-profits) and LOA Instructions are available at <http://fcc.mphi.org/sign-up.html> . If you do not have access to the Internet, please telephone me and I will mail a copy of all documents to you.
- A Site Survey for each geographically distinct site you wish to include in the network. The Survey asks you to specify primary and secondary preferences for the level of internet access for the site. After a vendor has been chosen, you will be given two internet-access-level quotes from which to choose. The quotes will be your share of network construction and first-year operating costs and monthly service costs after the first year of operation. A Site Survey template and a description of the four internet access levels (tiers) are available at <http://fcc.mphi.org/sign-up.html> . If you do not have access to the Internet, please telephone me and I will mail a copy of all documents to you.

Again, Microsoft Word templates for both the LOA and the Site Survey can be found at <http://fcc.mphi.org/sign-up.html> . Please remember that you may sign *one* LOA for *all* of your owned/subsidiary sites, but *each* site should be described in a *separate* Site Survey. (If you have already submitted an LOA and Site Survey[s] for this project, do not submit another copy.)

Please return your LOA and Site Survey(s) to: Michigan Public Health Institute  
Attn: FCC RHCPP Team  
2436 Woodlake Circle, Suite 300  
Okemos, MI 48864

**Please forward this package to other facilities.** This cover letter and all related documents are available at <http://fcc.mphi.org/sign-up.html> . We strongly encourage you to contact every eligible health care facility located in your area, ask them to look at the documents on our website, and encourage them to participate by submitting an LOA and Site Survey(s). As Metcalf's Law states, the value of a network is proportional to the square of the connections. In other words, the more facilities we link throughout Michigan, the greater the benefit to Michigan's citizens.

**Questions?** If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me or the Assistant Project Manager, Harry Levins (517.324.6039, [hlevins@mphi.org](mailto:hlevins@mphi.org)). MPHI's website, <http://fcc.mphi.org/> , and the FCC's website, <http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/rural/rhcp.html> , contain additional information about the project.

Sincerely,

Jeff Shaw  
Project Manager  
517.324.6055  
[jshaw@mphi.org](mailto:jshaw@mphi.org)

Documents available at <http://fcc.mphi.org/sign-up.html> :

1. A copy of this letter (for eligible public and non-profit health care providers)
2. A letter for (a) for-profit and (b) otherwise ineligible non-profit health care providers
3. LOA Template – not-for-profit
4. LOA Template – for profit
5. LOA Instructions
6. Site Survey (complete one for each geographically distinct site)
7. Technical specifications for network access (describing four levels, or tiers, of service)