

103^D CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 3249

To amend the Public Health Service Act to provide grants for the development of rural telemedicine, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

OCTOBER 7, 1993

Mr. SMITH of Iowa introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce

A BILL

To amend the Public Health Service Act to provide grants for the development of rural telemedicine, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Rural Telemedicine
5 Development Act of 1993”.

6 **SEC. 2. PURPOSE.**

7 It is the purpose of this Act to support the develop-
8 ment of telemedicine projects that are designed to improve
9 the delivery, accessibility and affordability of health care

1 services to Americans living in rural areas. This Act is
2 intended to—

3 (1) assist rural hospitals and other rural health
4 care providers in dealing with personnel shortages
5 and shared staffing arrangements by providing such
6 providers with the telecommunications technology
7 necessary to maintain contact with itinerant staff
8 and remote specialists;

9 (2) reduce the cost of care for rural patients
10 and strengthen rural health care providers by using
11 telecommunications technologies to permit such pa-
12 tients to stay in their local hospitals and to receive
13 other health services locally whenever possible and
14 appropriate, by reducing paperwork costs and by im-
15 proving coordination and efficiency in the delivery of
16 health care;

17 (3) provide rural health care providers with ac-
18 cess, via telecommunications systems, to equipment,
19 specialists, and continuing education programs that
20 are otherwise generally not available in rural areas;
21 and

22 (4) demonstrate the effectiveness of fiber optics
23 telecommunication systems in improving the quality
24 and access of health care services in rural areas.

1 **SEC. 3. ESTABLISHMENT OF GRANT PROGRAMS.**

2 Title XVII of the Public Health Service Act (42
3 U.S.C. 300u et seq.) is amended—

4 (1) in the title heading by striking out “AND
5 HEALTH PROMOTION” and inserting in lieu
6 thereof “, HEALTH PROMOTION AND
7 TELEMEDICINE DEVELOPMENT”;

8 (2) by inserting after the title heading the fol-
9 lowing:

10 **“Part A—Health Information and Health Promotion”;**

11 and

12 (3) by adding at the end thereof the following
13 new part:

14 **“Part B—Telemedicine Development**

15 **“SEC. 1711. GRANT PROGRAM FOR PROMOTING THE INI-**
16 **TIAL DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL**
17 **TELEMEDICINE NETWORKS.**

18 “(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary shall award
19 grants to eligible entities described in section 1714(a) for
20 the purpose of encouraging the initial development of rural
21 telemedicine networks. Grants shall be awarded under this
22 section to encourage the formation of rural health care
23 networks that could benefit from the use of telecommuni-
24 cations technology in providing health services to rural
25 areas.

1 “(b) APPLICATION.—To be eligible to receive a grant
2 under this section an entity shall prepare and submit to
3 the Secretary an application at such time, in such manner
4 and containing such information as the Secretary may re-
5 quire, including a description of the use to which the entity
6 will apply any amounts received under such grant.

7 “(c) PREFERENCE IN AWARDING GRANTS.—The Sec-
8 retary shall, in awarding grant under subsection (a), give
9 preference to applicants that—

10 “(1) are participants in rural health care net-
11 works or that propose to form such networks;

12 “(2) can demonstrate broad geographic cov-
13 erage in the rural areas of the State, or States in
14 which the applicant is located; and

15 “(3) propose to use Federal funds to develop
16 plans for, or to establish, pilot telecommunications
17 systems that will link rural hospitals and other rural
18 health care providers to other hospitals, and health
19 care providers.

20 **“SEC. 1712. GRANT PROGRAM FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF**
21 **ADVANCED RURAL TELEMEDICINE NET-**
22 **WORKS.**

23 “(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary shall award
24 grants to rural health networks for the purpose of linking
25 such networks together using advanced telemedicine sys-

1 tems. Grants shall be awarded under this section to fur-
2 ther develop telemedicine projects initiated by these rural
3 health care networks.

4 “(b) APPLICATION.—To be eligible to receive a grant
5 under this section an entity shall prepare and submit to
6 the Secretary an application at such time, in such manner
7 and containing such information as the Secretary may re-
8 quire, including a description of the use to which the entity
9 will apply any amounts received under such grant.

10 “(c) MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS.—The Secretary
11 may not award a grant to an applicant under subsection
12 (a) unless—

13 “(1) the applicant is determined by the Sec-
14 retary to include one or more rural health network;
15 and

16 “(2) the applicant can demonstrate broad geo-
17 graphical coverage in the rural areas of the State or
18 States in which it is located.

19 “(d) PREFERENCES IN AWARDING GRANTS.—The
20 Secretary shall, in awarding grants under subsection (a),
21 give preference to qualified applicants that—

22 “(1) can demonstrate that a majority of the
23 hospitals and other providers participating in the ap-
24 plicant group have functioned as networks for at

1 least 1 year prior to applying for funding under this
2 section; and

3 “(2) will use amounts provided under the grant
4 to provide a range of telecommunications applica-
5 tions such as teleradiology, telepathology, interactive
6 video consultation and remote educational services
7 and to promote areawide health planning and great-
8 er efficiency in administrative activities.

9 **“SEC. 1713. GRANT PROGRAM FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF**
10 **ADVANCED FIBER OPTIC BASED RURAL**
11 **TELEMEDICINE NETWORKS.**

12 “(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary shall award
13 grants to rural health networks for the purpose of linking
14 these networks to existing fiber optic telecommunications
15 systems.

16 “(b) APPLICATION.—To be eligible to receive a grant
17 under this section an entity shall prepare and submit to
18 the Secretary an application at such time, in such manner
19 and containing such information as the Secretary may re-
20 quire, including a description of the use to which the entity
21 will apply any amounts received under such grant.

22 “(c) MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS.—The Secretary
23 may not award a grant to an applicant under subsection
24 (a) unless—

1 “(1) the applicant is determined by the Sec-
2 retary to include one or more rural health network;

3 “(2) the applicant group can demonstrate broad
4 geographical coverage in the rural areas of the State
5 or States in which it is located; and

6 “(3) the applicant group will participate in an
7 existing fiber optic telecommunications system.

8 “(d) PREFERENCES IN AWARDING GRANTS.—The
9 Secretary shall, in awarding grants under subsection (a),
10 give preference to qualified applicants that—

11 “(1) will use grant funds to provide a range of
12 telecommunications applications including
13 teleradiology, telepathology, interactive video con-
14 sultation and remote educational services and to pro-
15 mote areawide health planning and greater efficiency
16 in administrative activities;

17 “(2) demonstrate that the majority of the hos-
18 pitals and other providers participating in the appli-
19 cant group have functioned as networks for at least
20 1 year prior to applying for funding under this sec-
21 tion; and

22 “(3) will participate in an existing Statewide
23 fiber optics cable system.

1 **“SEC. 1714. USE OF FUNDS FOR INITIAL DEVELOPMENT**
2 **GRANT PROGRAMS.**

3 “(a) ELIGIBLE ENTITIES.—Entities eligible to re-
4 ceive a grant under section 1711 shall include hospitals,
5 hospital networks, and other health care providers.

6 “(b) USE OF AMOUNTS.—Amounts received under a
7 grant awarded under section 1711 shall be utilized for the
8 initial development of rural telemedicine networks, includ-
9 ing the establishment of pilot telemedicine projects involv-
10 ing two or more providers. Such amounts may be used
11 to cover the costs associated with the development of
12 telemedicine networks and the acquisition or construction
13 of telecommunications facilities and equipment includ-
14 ing—

15 “(1) the development and acquisition through
16 lease or purchase of computer hardware and soft-
17 ware, audio and visual equipment, computer network
18 equipment, telecommunications transmission facili-
19 ties, telecommunications terminal equipment, inter-
20 active video equipment, data terminal equipment,
21 and other facilities and equipment that would fur-
22 ther the purposes authorized by this part;

23 “(2) the provision of technical assistance and
24 instruction for the development and use of such pro-
25 gramming, equipment, or facilities;

1 “(3) the development and acquisition of instruc-
2 tional programming; or

3 “(4) such other uses that are consistent with
4 achieving the purposes of this part as approved by
5 the Secretary.

6 **“SEC. 1715. USE OF FUNDS FOR ADVANCED TELEMEDICINE**
7 **GRANT PROGRAMS.**

8 “Grants under sections 1712 and 1713 shall be avail-
9 able to health care networks for the development of
10 telemedicine networks and the acquisition or construction
11 of telecommunications facilities and equipment includ-
12 ing—

13 “(1) the development and acquisition through
14 lease or purchase of computer hardware and soft-
15 ware, audio and visual equipment, computer network
16 equipment, telecommunications transmission facili-
17 ties, telecommunications terminal equipment, inter-
18 active video equipment, data terminal equipment,
19 and other facilities and equipment that would fur-
20 ther the purposes authorized by this part;

21 “(2) the provision of technical assistance and
22 instruction for the development and use of such pro-
23 gramming, equipment, or facilities;

24 “(3) the development and acquisition of instruc-
25 tional programming; or

1 “(4) such other uses that are consistent with
2 achieving the purposes of this part as approved by
3 the Secretary.

4 **“SEC. 1716. DEFINITIONS.**

5 “For the purposes of this part:

6 “(1) **COMPUTER NETWORKS.**—The term ‘com-
7 puter networks’ means computer hardware and soft-
8 ware, terminals, signal conversion equipment includ-
9 ing both modulators and demodulators, or related
10 devices, used to communicate with other computers
11 to process and exchange data through a tele-
12 communication network in which signals are gen-
13 erated, modified, or prepared for transmission, or re-
14 ceived, via telecommunications terminal equipment
15 and telecommunications transmission facilities.

16 “(2) **DATA TERMINAL EQUIPMENT.**—The term
17 ‘data terminal equipment’ means equipment that
18 converts user information into data signals for
19 transmission, or reconverts the received data signals
20 into user information, and is normally found on the
21 terminal of a circuit and on the premises of the end
22 user.

23 “(3) **FIBER OPTIC CABLE.**—The term ‘fiber
24 optic cable’ means a bundle of optical transmission
25 elements or waveguides usually consisting of a fiber

1 core and fiber cladding that can guide a lightwave
2 and that are incorporated into an assembly of mate-
3 rials that provide tensile strength and external pro-
4 tection.

5 “(4) INTERACTIVE VIDEO EQUIPMENT.—The
6 term ‘interactive video equipment’ means equipment
7 used to produce and prepare for transmission audio
8 and visual signals from at least two distant locations
9 in order that individuals at such locations can ver-
10 bally and visually communicate with each other, and
11 such equipment includes monitors, other display de-
12 vices, cameras or other recording devices, audio pick-
13 up devices, and other related equipment.

14 “(5) HEALTH CARE NETWORK.—The term
15 ‘rural health care network’ means a group of rural
16 hospitals or other rural health care providers (in-
17 cluding clinics, physicians and non-physician pri-
18 mary care providers) that have entered into a formal
19 relationship with each other or with nonrural hos-
20 pitals and health care providers for the purpose of
21 strengthening the delivery of health care services in
22 rural areas or specifically to improve their patients’
23 access to telemedicine services. At least 75 percent
24 of hospitals and other health care providers partici-
25 pating in the network shall be located in rural areas.

1 “(6) STATEWIDE FIBER OPTIC CABLE SYS-
2 TEM.—The term ‘Statewide fiber optic cable system’
3 means a telecommunications system that will carry
4 voice, data, and full motion video traffic through
5 fiber optic cable to a point of presence in every coun-
6 ty in the State in which it is located.

7 “(7) TELECOMMUNICATIONS TERMINAL EQUIP-
8 MENT.—The term ‘telecommunications terminal
9 equipment’ means the assembly of telecommuni-
10 cations equipment to the end of a circuit, normally
11 located on the premises of the end user, that inter-
12 faces with telecommunications transmission facili-
13 ties, and that is used to modify, convert, encode, or
14 otherwise prepare signals to be transmitted via such
15 telecommunications facilities, or that is used to mod-
16 ify, reconvert or carry signals received from such fa-
17 cilities, the purpose of which is to accomplish the
18 goal for which the circuit was established.

19 “(8) TELECOMMUNICATIONS TRANSMISSION
20 FACILITIES.—The term ‘telecommunications trans-
21 mission facilities’ means these facilities that trans-
22 mit, receive, or carry data between the telecommuni-
23 cations terminal equipment at each end of a tele-
24 communications circuit or path. Such facilities in-
25 clude microwave antennae, relay stations and towers,

1 other telecommunications antennae, fiber-optic ca-
2 bles and repeaters, coaxial cables, communication
3 satellite ground station complexes, copper cable elec-
4 tronic equipment associated with telecommunications
5 transmissions, and similar items as defined by the
6 Secretary.

7 **“SEC. 1717. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

8 “For the purposes of carrying out this part, there are
9 authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be nec-
10 essary for each of the fiscal years 1994 through 1997.”.

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