



June 21, 2022

The Honorable Patty Murray  
Chair  
Labor, Health and Human Services, Education,  
and Related Agencies Subcommittee  
U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee  
184 Dirksen Office Senate Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Roy Blunt  
Ranking Member  
Labor, Health and Human Services, Education,  
and Related Agencies Subcommittee  
U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee  
125 Hart Office Senate Building  
Washington, DC 20510

**RE: ATA Action Support for Health Resources & Services Administration (HRSA) Office for the Advancement of Telehealth (OAT) Programs**

Dear Chair Murray and Ranking Member Blunt:

On behalf of ATA Action, the American Telemedicine Association's affiliated trade association focused on advocacy, thank you for your continued work on the Senate Appropriations Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Subcommittee. As you consider the Subcommittee's funding priorities for Fiscal Year (FY) 2023, ATA Action respectfully requests \$44.5 million, as requested in the President's Budget, for the Health Resources & Services Administration's (HRSA) Office for the Advancement of Telehealth (OAT).

During the COVID-19 pandemic, telehealth has proven to be an effective and efficient way for patients across the nation to receive care. ATA Action supports HRSA's efforts to focus on improving health care in rural, urban, and underserved communities through telehealth. The HRSA's OAT was established in 1998 with the mission to lead, coordinate and promote the use of telehealth technologies by fostering partnerships within HRSA and other Federal agencies, states and private sector groups to expand the field of telehealth by: administering telehealth grant programs; providing technical assistance; assessing technology investment strategies; developing distance learning and training programs for health care providers; evaluating the use of telehealth technologies; developing telehealth policy initiatives to improve access to quality health services; and promoting knowledge about best practices.

Currently, there are [eight OAT programs](#): Evidence Based Telehealth Network Program (EBTNP), Licensure Portability Grant Program, Telehealth Broadband Pilot Program, Telehealth Centers of Excellence (COE), Telehealth Network Grant Program, Telehealth Resource Center Program (TRC), Telehealth Technology Enabled Learning Program (TTEL), and Telehealth Focused Rural Health Resource Center Cooperative Agreement Program (TF RHCCA). ATA Action is highly supportive of these pilot programs as each aim to address barriers in the current healthcare system and promote the expansion of telehealth to increase access to health care services.

For example, the Telehealth Broadband Pilot Program (TBP) is a three year pilot that is the result of a joint effort between the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), HHS, and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). The program assesses the broadband capacity available to rural health care providers and patient communities to improve their access to telehealth services. As you know,



broadband access is a critical component, that many rural and underserved communities lack, to utilizing telehealth services. According to the FCC, in rural areas, nearly one-fourth of the population —14.5 million people—lack access to broadband services. This pilot aims to expand broadband capacity specifically in rural America. This is one example of how these programs aim to promote the use of telehealth, improve health outcomes and address access to barriers. Therefore, ATA Action requests that the Subcommittee invests \$44.5 million for FY2023 in the HRSA OAT to ensure its able to continue supporting in grantees as well as fund new grants and initiatives to ensure patients can continue to receive care where and when they need it.

Again, we appreciate your leadership and look forward to working with you to advance telehealth policies. If you have any questions or would like to discuss further, please contact Kyle Zebley, Executive Director, [kzebley@ataaction.org](mailto:kzebley@ataaction.org).

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kyle Zebley".

Kyle Zebley  
Executive Director  
ATA Action