



PUBLIC NOTICE

Federal Communications Commission
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COMMENT SOUGHT ON REQUEST TO MERGE TEXAS RURAL HEALTH CARE PILOT PROGRAM PROJECTS

WC Docket No. 02-60

Comment Date: March 20, 2009
Reply Comment: March 24, 2009

The Wireline Competition Bureau seeks comment on a request to merge two participants in the universal service Rural Health Care Pilot Program (RHC Pilot Program), Texas Healthcare Network (THN) and Texas Health Information Network Collaborative (THINC).¹ The THN project application was filed by THN, as lead applicant and fiduciary agent for THN, Texas Organization of Rural & Community Hospitals (TORCH), Community Hospital Foundation of Texas (CHFTX), and Southeast Texas Healthy System (STHS).² THN has requested to withdraw from participation in the RHC Pilot Program.³ TORCH, a member of the THN consortium, has requested to merge and designate THINC as THC's successor.⁴ CHRISTUS Health will serve as the fiduciary agent for the merged projects.⁵

Interested parties may file **comments on or before March 20, 2009** and **reply comments on or before March 27, 2009**. All pleadings are to reference **WC Docket No. 02-60**. Comments may be filed using the Commission's Electronic Comment Filing System (ECFS) or by filing paper copies.⁶

¹ Letter from David Pearson, Texas Organization of Rural & Community Hospitals, to William England, Universal Service Administrative Company, WC Docket No. 02-60 (dated December 22, 2008) (TORCH December 22 Letter); Letter from Randall Zunke, President Texas Healthcare Network, to William England, Universal Service Administrative Company, WC Docket No. 02-60 (dated December 22, 2008) (THN December 22 Letter); Letter from George Conklin, Senior Vice President CHRISTUS Health, and David Pearson, President Texas Organization of Rural & Community Hospitals, to William England, Universal Service Administrative Company, WC Docket No. 02-60 (dated January 28, 2009) (January 28 Letter).

² Texas Healthcare Network Application, WC Docket No. 02-60, at 3 (filed May 4, 2007).

³ THN December 22 Letter.

⁴ TORCH December 22 Letter.

⁵ January 28 Letter at 6.

⁶ See *Electronic Filing of Documents in Rulemaking Proceedings*, GC Docket No. 97-113, Report and Order, 13 FCC Red 11322 (1998).

- Electronic Filers: Comments may be filed electronically using the Internet by accessing the ECFS: <http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/ecfs/>. Filers should follow the instructions provided on the website for submitting comments.
- For ECFS filers, if multiple docket or rulemaking numbers appear in the caption of this proceeding, filers must transmit one electronic copy of the comments for each docket or rulemaking number referenced in the caption. In completing the transmittal screen, filers should include their full name, U.S. Postal Service mailing address, and the applicable docket or rulemaking number. Parties may also submit an electronic comment by Internet e-mail. To get filing instructions, filers should send an e-mail to ecfs@fcc.gov, and include the following words in the body of the message, "get form." A sample form and directions will be sent in response.
- Paper Filers: Parties who choose to file by paper must file an original and four copies of each filing. If more than one docket or rulemaking number appears in the caption of this proceeding, filers must submit two additional copies for each additional docket or rulemaking number.

Filings can be sent by hand or messenger delivery, by commercial overnight courier, or by first-class or overnight U.S. Postal Service mail (although we continue to experience delays in receiving U.S. Postal Service mail). All filings must be addressed to the Commission's Secretary, Office of the Secretary, Federal Communications Commission.

The Commission's contractor will receive hand-delivered or messenger-delivered paper filings for the Commission's Secretary at 236 Massachusetts Avenue, N.E., Suite 110, Washington, D.C. 20002. The filing hours at this location are 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. All hand deliveries must be held together with rubber bands or fasteners. Any envelopes must be disposed of before entering the building. Commercial overnight mail (other than U.S. Postal Service Express Mail and Priority Mail) must be sent to 9300 East Hampton Drive, Capitol Heights, MD 20743. U.S. Postal Service first-class, Express, and Priority mail should be addressed to 445 12th Street, S.W., Washington D.C. 20554.

People with Disabilities: To request materials in accessible formats for people with disabilities (braille, large print, electronic files, audio format), send an e-mail to fcc504@fcc.gov or call the Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau at (202) 418-0530 (voice), (202) 418-0432 (tty).

In addition, one copy of each pleading must be sent to each of the following:

- (1) The Commission's duplicating contractor, Best Copy and Printing, Inc., 445 12th Street, S.W., Room CY-B402, Washington, D.C. 20554, www.bcpiweb.com; phone: (202) 488-5300, fax: (202) 488-5563;
- (2) Ernesto Beckford, Telecommunications Access Policy Division, Wireline Competition Bureau, 445 12th Street, S.W., Room 5-A317, Washington, D.C. 20554; e-mail: Ernesto.Beckford@fcc.gov; and
- (3) David Duarte, Telecommunications Access Policy Division, Wireline Competition Bureau, 445 12th Street, S.W., Room 5-A422, Washington, D.C. 20554; e-mail: David.Duarte@fcc.gov.

Filings and comments are also available for public inspection and copying during regular business hours at the FCC Reference Information Center, Portals II, 445 12th Street, S.W., Room CY-A257, Washington, D.C. 20554. They may also be purchased from the Commission's duplicating contractor, Best Copy and Printing, Inc., Portals II, 445 12th Street, S.W., Room CY-B402, Washington, D.C. 20554, telephone: (202) 488-5300, fax: (202) 488-5563, or via e-mail www.bcpiweb.com.

This matter shall be treated as a “permit-but-disclose” proceeding in accordance with the Commission’s *ex parte* rules.⁷ Persons making oral *ex parte* presentations are reminded that memoranda summarizing the presentations must contain summaries of the substance of the presentation and not merely a listing of the subjects discussed. More than a one or two sentence description of the views and arguments presented generally is required.⁸ Other rules pertaining to oral and written *ex parte* presentations in permit-but-disclose proceedings are set forth in section 1.1206(b) of the Commission’s rules.⁹

For further information, please contact Ernesto Beckford, Telecommunications Access Policy Division, Wireline Competition Bureau at (202) 418-7400 or TTY (202) 418-0484.

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⁷ 47 C.F.R. §§ 1.1200 *et seq.*

⁸ *See* 47 C.F.R. § 1.1206(b)(2).

⁹ 47 C.F.R. § 1.1206(b).