

April 11, 2016

The Honorable Fred Upton,
Chairman
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Greg Walden,
Subcommittee Chair
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Frank Pallone,
Ranking Member
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Anna G. Eshoo,
Subcommittee Ranking Member
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Upton:

SUBJECT: Energy & Commerce Hearing on H.R. 4111

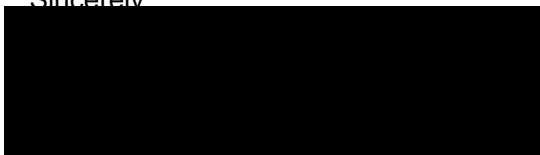
On behalf of The Evangelical Lutheran Good Samaritan Society, I am writing to thank you for including H.R. 4111 (*the Rural Health Care Connectivity Act of 2015*) as part of the hearing scheduled to be conducted by the Subcommittee on Communications and Technology on April 13. If enacted, this bill would offer huge and much-needed support for providers of skilled nursing care – like The Evangelical Lutheran Good Samaritan Society (the Society) – that operate in rural and frontier areas of the country.

Like many providers serving an aging population, the Society is a provider of skilled nursing care in many rural areas of the country. As such, we are dependent on the growing use of technology to deliver needed care and services to locations that do not have the benefit of nearby health clinics or rural hospitals. The use of broadband networks is critical to accommodate the delivery and exchange of data, images, Web streaming, and other health information that is vital to ensure that the day-to-day care needs of residents and patients are met. Further, an important resource for assisting with the funding of these broadband networks is the Universal Service Fund (USF) that is administered by the Federal Communications Commission. Although the majority of our healthcare partners in rural areas of the country are afforded the privilege of accessing the USF to assist with funding broadband investment, skilled nursing facilities (SNFs) are not.

We have endeavored to work with the FCC for a number of years to seek the ability for not-for-profit SNFs like the Society to access the USF. However, this work has been fruitless despite our ongoing efforts. Thus, enactment of H.R. 4111, along with its counterpart in the Senate (S. 1916) will ensure critical access for SNFs to FCC broadband funds as, we believe, the Telecommunications Act of 1996 intended.

We are extremely grateful for your leadership on this important issue to the Society, and will be doing whatever we can to promote support of the passage of this bill. We are particularly thankful to Representatives Lance, Loeb sack and Cramer for their sponsorship of H.R. 4111. Please accept our thanks. We look forward to the upcoming hearing to offer our support to these important efforts.

Sincerely,



David J. Horazdovsky
President & CEO

Cc: Ranking Member Pallone
Cc: Subcommittee Chair Walden
Cc: Subcommittee Ranking Member Eshoo