

BEFORE THE NEBRASKA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

In the Matter of the Nebraska)	Application No. NUSF-57
Public Service Commission, on)	
its own motion, seeking to)	ORDER OPENING DOCKET
administer the Nebraska)	
Telehealth Program.)	Entered: June 27, 2006

BY THE COMMISSION:

O P I N I O N A N D F I N D I N G S

The Nebraska Public Service Commission (Commission) hereby opens the above-captioned proceeding to administer the Nebraska Telehealth Program. Telehealth program support was previously approved by Commission order in NUSF-26, Progression Order No. 3, on December 17, 2002. There, the Commission instructed the Nebraska Hospital Association, the Nebraska eligible telecommunications carriers (NETCs), and the Nebraska Universal Service Fund (NUSF) Director, to work in a collaborative manner on a Telehealth Plan which the Commission could approve. The Commission also required the NUSF Department to establish procedures to process the invoices, collecting reports and to disburse program support where appropriate.

On June 13, 2006, after notice and hearing, the Commission entered an order approving support for the Telehealth Plan, filed by the Nebraska Hospital Association. The approved plan was attached to the Commission's order and specifically set forth a list of hospitals, connection charges and other Commission approved charges eligible for support. The Telehealth Plan support is disbursed to NETCs for providing access to the hospitals approved by the Telehealth Plan. Currently, the NUSF Department reviews the invoices to determine whether support payment requests are accurate, within the scope of the Commission's order in NUSF-26, and whether support should be disbursed.

In this proceeding, the Commission intends to further the process of establishing policies and procedures for the Telehealth program which may eventually be codified in rules and regulations. This docket will also be the vehicle by which the NUSF Director brings administrative requests for adjusting approved program support to the Commission for approval.

The following proposal for processing Telehealth program support requests administratively is hereby open for public comment:

1. Any adjustments to the Telehealth Plan approved by the Commission on June 13, 2006 must be filed in writing with the NUSF Director. The NUSF Director will review any proposed corrections, deletions, or other adjustments filed and will make a recommendation to the Commission at a public meeting of the Commission.
2. During the course of a public meeting, the Commission will determine whether to approve, deny, or in the alternative, to set a hearing on the request.
3. If any person is aggrieved by the Commission's approval or denial of a requested adjustment, said person may file a Motion for Reconsideration with the Commission within 10 days from the date of Commission action.
4. The Commission will hold a hearing on a Motion for Reconsideration if a hearing is requested in writing.
5. The Commission will make a determination after a written transcript has been completed. Written findings and conclusions will accompany the Commission's determination.

Comments on this proposal must be filed on or before August 2, 2006. Persons filing comments must file five (5) paper copies along with one (1) copy in electronic format. Electronic copies may be sent via electronic mail to brandy.zierott@psc.ne.gov.

In addition, the Commission hereby incorporates into this proceeding, the record of the NUSF-26 and NUSF-35 dockets pertaining to the Nebraska Telehealth Program. A list of orders incorporated and made a part of this record is attached hereto as Attachment "A."

O R D E R

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED by the Nebraska Public Service Commission that the above-captioned proceeding be, and it is hereby opened, to administer the Nebraska Telehealth Program.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that comments responsive to this order be filed on or before August 2, 2006 in the manner prescribed above.

MADE AND ENTERED at Lincoln, Nebraska this 27th day of June, 2006.

NEBRASKA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

COMMISSIONERS CONCURRING:

Chairman

ATTEST:

Deputy Director