

2001 Rural Health Care Committee Meetings Minutes

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UNIVERSAL SERVICE ADMINISTRATIVE COMPANY

Rural Health Care Committee Meeting

January 29, 2001

MINUTES

The quarterly meeting of the Rural Health Care Committee of the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) Board of Directors was held on Monday, January 29, 2001, at the Westin Grand, 2350 M Street, NW, Washington, D.C. Dr. Jay Sanders, Chair of the Committee, called the meeting to order at 3:10 p.m. Eastern Time. Ms. Ann Simmons, Administrative Assistant for USAC, called the roll on behalf of Mr. D. Scott Barash, Assistant Secretary. Seven of the eight members were present, representing a quorum:

Sanders, Dr. Jay – Chair	Jackson, Jimmy
Hess, Kevin – Vice Chair	Parrino, Cheryl
Hogerty, Martha	Talbott, Dr. Brian
Thoms, Allan	

One member joined the meeting in progress:

Lineberry, Isiah – *by telephone*

Other Board members present:

Gumper, Frank
Davis, Fr. William
Rivera, Robert

Officers of the Corporation present:

Barash, D. Scott – Assistant Secretary
Haga, Robert – Assistant Treasurer

Others present for the meeting:

<u>NAME</u>	<u>COMPANY</u>
Blackwell, Mel	USAC
England, Bill	USAC
Faunce, Donna	USAC
Jones, Narda	FCC
Picou, Michele	NECA
Sandy, Colin	NECA
Simmons, Ann	USAC

OPEN SESSION:

ACTION ITEMS:

- a1. Approval of the Minutes.** On a motion duly made and seconded, the Committee approved the minutes as distributed of the Rural Health Care Committee meeting of Monday, October 23, 2000.
- a2. Annual Election of Committee Chairs and Vice Chairs.** Ms Parrino stated that the annual election of Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee takes place at the January quarterly meetings. The Rural Health Care Committee should bring nominations for Committee Chair and Vice Chair to the Board of Directors.

On a motion duly made and seconded, the Committee adopted the following resolution:

RESOLVED, That the USAC Rural Health Care Committee recommends that the USAC Board of Directors elect **Dr. Jay Sanders** as Chair and **Mr. Isiah Lineberry** as Vice Chair of the USAC Rural Health Care Committee for the term of one year that shall begin at the conclusion of January 2001 Board meeting and that shall conclude at the close of the January 2002 Board meeting.

- a3. Approval of USAC Enforcement Investigation and Evaluation Procedures.** Mr. Barash noted that, with the exception of the Chair, the Committee members had reviewed the presentation concerning enforcement investigation and evaluation procedures at other committee meetings earlier in the day. The Chair indicated that it was not necessary to make the presentation again at this time.

On a motion duly made and seconded, the Committee adopted the following resolution:

RESOLVED, That the USAC Rural Health Care Committee recommends to the USAC Board of Directors that the proposed USAC Enforcement Compliance Plan be adopted.

- a4. Approval of the Rural Health Care Program Year 4 Window Length.** Mr. Blackwell stated that the Rural Health Care Committee must establish the length of the Form 466/468 filing window for the funding Year 4, which will commence on July 1, 2001. The Rural Health Care Division (RHCD) recommends adopting a 70-day filing window, which is consistent with the window length approved last year. The current target date for opening the Year 4 application-filing window is March 12, 2001.

On a motion duly made and seconded, the Committee adopted the following resolution:

RESOLVED, That the USAC Rural Health Care Committee approves establishing a 70-day window for the filing of Forms 466/468 for the 2001-2002 funding year.

- a5. Approval of the Annual 2001 and 2nd Quarter 2001 Rural Health Care Programmatic Budget.** Ms. Faunce reported to the Committee on the annual 2001 and 2nd Quarter 2001 Budget. Ms. Faunce stated that the compensation and benefits expense is slightly higher for 2001 reflecting a reallocation of staff; an increase in travel to the new vendor located in New Jersey; and a reduction in professional fees due to use of in-house audit staff and technical capabilities. Dr. Sanders added that the proposed annual budget for 2001 is 20 percent lower than the revised 2000 budget.

On a motion duly made and seconded, the Committee adopted the following resolution:

RESOLVED, That the USAC Rural Health Care Committee approves an annual 2001 Rural Health Care Programmatic Budget of \$2,645,900; and

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the USAC Rural Health Care Committee approves a 2nd Quarter 2001 Rural Health Care Programmatic Budget of \$766,100.

- a6. Approval of 2nd Quarter 2001 Rural Health Care Projections and Resolution on the February 2001 FCC Filing.** Mr. Blackwell reported that the total projected funding requirement for the Rural Health Care Support Mechanism for 2Q2001 is \$2.625 million. Mr. Blackwell also reported that Program Year 2 is almost completed with approximately 90 percent of the packets completely processed. He reported that funding commitments for Year 2 total approximately \$7.105 million and that the application process is going well with respect to the transfer of the application processing to NECA in mid-year. USAC continues to receive and process funding requests for Year 3. Ms. Parrino pointed out that Attachments B and C are graphics of the total projected collections versus disbursements for the Program .

On a motion duly made and seconded, the Committee adopted the following resolution:

RESOLVED, That the USAC Rural Health Care Committee approves the projection of demand for the Rural Health Care Program for the 2nd Quarter 2001, and further recommends that USAC request that the FCC establish a contribution factor to collect \$2.625 million of additional funds for the Rural Health Care Program for the 2nd Quarter 2001, and authorizes USAC staff to file this information in the February 2001 FCC filing.

a7. Miscellaneous.

- Committee members expressed appreciation from their stakeholders in Alaska, Arizona, and Iowa for the efforts of the Rural Health Care Division in administering the program.
- Mr. Thoms asked if RHCD had regular conference calls for participants similar to the calls conducted by the Schools and Libraries Division. Mr. Blackwell stated that RHCD status calls are held approximately every 3 months, but would revise the schedule to conduct the calls on a regular monthly basis.

- Dr. Sanders announced that Mr. Rivera would be joining the Rural Health Care Committee and Mr. Hess would be resigning from the Rural Health Care Committee. The Committee offered its thanks to Mr. Hess and gave Mr. Hess a round of applause for his service on the Committee since its inception.

On a motion duly made and seconded, the Committee adopted the following resolution:

RESOLVED, That the USAC Rural Health Care Committee recommends that the USAC Board of Directors elect Mr. Robert Rivera to represent service providers on the USAC Rural Health Care Committee.

INFORMATION ITEMS:

- i1. Rural Health Care Program Status Report.** Mr. Blackwell reported that for Program Year 4, the revised Form 465 was submitted to the FCC for review and approval on December 14, 2000. The changes that are being recommended are primarily cosmetic and should not require OMB approval. Mr. Blackwell also reported on RHCD outreach activities. Staff made presentations at both the America Telemedicine Association Industry Advisory Board's 2nd Annual Strategic Business Opportunities Conference in Bethesda, Maryland, and at the Office of Rural Health Policy's Grantees Meeting. Staff continues to participate in meetings of the Joint Working Group on Telemedicine. RHCD has sent out 3,000 copies of the brochure "Universal Service Discounts for Rural Health Care Providers" to various rural health care organizations and potential applicants.
- i2. Status of Appeals.** Mr. Blackwell reported that between October 1 and December 31, 2000, RHCD received two new letters of appeal and that the two appeals have been resolved. The FCC did not receive any new Rural Health Care Program appeals during this period. There is no backlog of appeals to be resolved.
- i3. Summary of the Medicare Reimbursement Policy for Telemedicine.** Dr. Sanders gave the Committee a summary of Medicare legislation that will have an impact on the Rural Health Care Support Mechanism. Legislation passed late last year will substantially increase Medicare coverage of telemedicine in the following ways: (1) coverage will be expanded to cover all rural areas; (2) the types of medical services eligible for reimbursement will be expanded; (3) the current complex fee-sharing requirement between practitioners will be eliminated at both ends of a teleconsultation; (4) allowance of a new \$20 facility fee will be included; and (5) store-forward (non-real time) teleconsultation services will be eligible in Alaska and Hawaii. "Tele-home care" is allowed to be used under the new Medicare Prospective Payment System for home care. These changes are scheduled to take effect October 1, 2001.

Dr. Sanders stated that, until now, most practitioners have not been reimbursed by Medicare for delivering telemedicine services. Passage of this legislation increases eligibility for reimbursement from just over 5 percent of the Medicare population to over 20 percent. Requests for universal service support of "telecommunications necessary for the provision of health care" likely will increase as more practitioners view telemedicine as a valuable and now reimbursable tool to expand their services in rural areas.

- i4. Rural Health Care Program Timeline and Key Dates.** Mr. Blackwell reported key dates associated with Year 2, Year 3, and Year 4 application cycles and audits. Mr. Blackwell highlighted the current 1st Quarter 2001 activities.
- i5. Miscellaneous.** Mr. Blackwell provided the Committee with draft copies of the 2000 USAC Annual Report for their review and comments. Mr. Blackwell requested input by February 9, 2001. The Annual Report is due to the FCC and Congress by March 31, 2001.

There being no further business to attend to, Dr. Sanders adjourned the meeting at 3:45 p.m. Eastern Time.

D. Scott Barash
Assistant Secretary

Date

012901RHCdraftmin

UNIVERSAL SERVICE ADMINISTRATIVE COMPANY

Rural Health Care Committee Meeting

April 23, 2001

MINUTES

The quarterly meeting of the Rural Health Care Committee of the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) Board of Directors was held on Monday, April 23, 2001, at the Westin Grand, 2350 M Street, NW, Washington, D.C. Dr. Jay Sanders, Chair of the Committee, called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. Eastern Time. Ms. Ann Simmons, Administrative Assistant for USAC, called the roll on behalf of Mr. D. Scott Barash, Assistant Secretary. Seven of the eight members were present, representing a quorum:

Hogerty, Martha
Jackson, Jimmy
Parrino, Cheryl
Rivera, Robert
Sanders, Dr. Jay
Talbott, Dr. Brain
Thoms, Allan

One member joined the meeting in progress:

Lineberry, Isiah – *by telephone*

Officers of the Corporation present:

Barash, D. Scott – Assistant Secretary
Haga, Robert – Assistant Treasurer

Others present for the meeting:

<u>NAME</u>	<u>COMPANY</u>
Blackwell, Mel	USAC
England, Bill	USAC
Faunce, Donna	USAC
Rodda, Jim	USAC
Sandy, Colin	NECA
Simmons, Ann	USAC
Williams, Romanda	FCC

ACTION ITEMS:

- a1. Approval of the Minutes.** On a motion duly made and seconded, the Committee approved the minutes as distributed of the Rural Health Care Committee meeting of Monday, January 29, 2001.
- a2. Approval of 2001 Beneficiary Audit Plan for the Rural Health Care Support Mechanism.** Mr. Blackwell stated that staff seeks approval of the audit approach and scope of the 2001 Audit of Beneficiaries of the Rural Health Care Support Mechanism. USAC's internal audit staff will be performing the Rural Health Care Audit for 2001. The selective use of internal staff will allow USAC to increase the number of audits while reducing audit cost. The USAC Internal Auditor, in consultation with Rural Health Care Division (RHCD) staff and the CEO has selected the beneficiaries to be audited. RHCD staff intends for the audit report to be completed in October 2001 and presented to the Committee shortly thereafter. The plan presented to the Committee tracks the plan previously reviewed by the Committee. Mr. Blackwell referred Committee members to last year's audit report and will send a copy of that report to new Committee members.

On a motion duly made and seconded, the Committee adopted the following resolution:

RESOLVED, That the USAC Rural Health Care Committee approves the audit plan approach and the scope of the 2001 Audit of Beneficiaries of the Rural Health Care Support Mechanism.

- a3. Approval of the 3rd Quarter 2001 Rural Health Care Programmatic Budget.** Ms. Faunce reported that the Committee must approve a 3rd Quarter 2001 Rural Health Care Programmatic Budget to be included in the May 2001 FCC filing. This budget has not changed since the approval for the January 2001 budget. Dr. Sanders stated that the proposed 3rd Quarter 2001 budget is 8 percent lower than 3rd Quarter 2000 actual expenditures.

On a motion duly made and seconded, the Committee adopted the following resolution:

RESOLVED, That the USAC Rural Health Care Committee approves a 3rd Quarter 2001 Rural Health Care Programmatic Budget of \$596,100.

- a4. Approval of 3rd Quarter 2001 Rural Health Care Projections and Resolution on the May 2001 FCC Filing.** Mr. Blackwell reported that RHCD staff is completing the processing of Year 2 applications. A total of \$7.2 million has been committed and \$4.3 million will be disbursed for Year 2. The Year 3 window for filing requests for support opened on March 30, 2000, and will close on June 13, 2001. Demand for Year 3 is estimated at approximately \$8 million. The Year 4 application-filing window opened on March 26, 2001, and Year 4 demand is estimated at approximately \$9 million. Funds collected for Years 2 and 3 contribute to an over-funded situation, which when coupled with the estimated 3Q2001-funding requirement for program Year 4 results in a negative collection amount.

a5. Miscellaneous.

- **Request for Update from the RHCD Staff on the Status of the FCC Evaluation of the Benefits Derived from the Rural Health Care Support Mechanism.** Dr. Sanders, the Committee Chair, **DIRECTED** RHCD staff to request information from the FCC concerning when the FCC plans to conduct an evaluation of the benefits derived from the Rural Health Care Support Mechanism.

INFORMATION ITEMS:

- i1. Rural Health Care Support Mechanism Status Report.** Mr. Blackwell reported that RHCD staff has conducted the first two monthly outreach conference calls for service providers and applicants. A regularly scheduled monthly outreach call will be held on the second Thursday of each month. Mr. Thoms thanked Mr. Blackwell for conducting the calls. RHCD staff has been distributing brochures about the Program and will be mailing out 3,000 additional brochures to possible program participants in a continuing effort to inform the applicant base of the support mechanism.
- i2. Status of Appeals.** Mr. Blackwell reported that the RHCD received five new letters of appeal. All five appeals have been resolved. The FCC has one appeal still pending.
- i3. Rural Health Care Support Mechanism Timeline and Key Dates.** Mr. Blackwell reported on key dates associated with Year 2, 3, and 4 application cycles and audits. Mr. Blackwell highlighted the current 2nd Quarter 2001 activities.
- i4. Miscellaneous.** None.

There being no further business to attend to, Dr. Sanders adjourned the meeting at 3:35 p.m. Eastern Time.

D. Scott Barash
Assistant Secretary

Date

042301RHCmin

UNIVERSAL SERVICE ADMINISTRATIVE COMPANY

Rural Health Care Committee Meeting

July 23, 2001

MINUTES

The quarterly meeting of the Rural Health Care Committee of the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) Board of Directors was held on Monday, July 23, 2001, at the Westin Grand, 2350 M Street, NW, Washington, D.C. Dr. Jay Sanders, Chair of the Committee, called the meeting to order at 2:45 p.m. Eastern Time. Ms. Ann Simmons, Administrative Assistant for USAC, called the roll on behalf of Mr. D. Scott Barash, Assistant Secretary. Seven of the eight members were present, representing a quorum:

Hogerty, Martha
Jackson, Jimmy – *by telephone*
Lineberry, Isiah – *by telephone*
Parrino, Cheryl
Sanders, Dr. Jay
Talbott, Dr. Brain
Thoms, Allan – *by telephone*

One member absent:

Rivera, Robert

Officers of the Corporation present:

Gumper, Frank
Buller, Karen
Barash, D. Scott – Assistant Secretary
Haga, Robert – Assistant Treasurer

Others present for the meeting:

NAME	COMPANY
Blackwell, Mel	USAC
England, Bill	USAC
Faunce, Donna	USAC

NAME
Jose, Stephanie
Simmons, Ann

COMPANY
USAC
USAC

ACTION ITEMS:

- a1. **Approval of the Minutes.** On a motion duly made and seconded, the Committee approved the minutes as distributed of the Rural Health Care Committee meeting of Monday, April 23, 2001.
- a2. **Acceptance of USAC 2000 Financial Audits and Agreed Upon Procedures Reviews.** Ms. Parrino reported to the Committee that USAC's independent auditor has completed the 2000 financial and operational audits for USAC. The review does not identify any major issues and USAC has received a clean opinion.

On a motion duly made and seconded, the Committee adopted the following resolution:

RESOLVED, That the USAC Rural Health Care Committee recommends that the USAC Board of Directors accept the USAC 2000 agreed upon procedures review as it relates to the Rural Health Care Support Mechanism.

- a3. **Approval of the 4th Quarter 2001 Rural Health Care Programmatic Budget.** Ms. Faunce stated that the Committee must approve a 4th Quarter 2001 Programmatic Budget for the Rural Health Care Support Mechanism to include in the August 2001 FCC filing. The proposed 4th Quarter 2001 budget of \$580,900 is lower than the 4th Quarter 2000 Rural Health Care Support Mechanism budget. Ms. Faunce then reviewed the information in Attachments A, B & C of the issue paper provided to the Committee.

On a motion duly made and seconded, the Committee adopted the following resolution:

RESOLVED, That the USAC Rural Health Care Committee approves a 4th Quarter 2001 Rural Health Care Support Mechanism budget of \$580,900.

- a4. **Approval of 4th Quarter 2001 Rural Health Care Support Mechanism Projections and Resolution on the August 2001 FCC Filing.** Mr. Blackwell reported that USAC has completed all processing associated with Year 2 Form 466/468 packets as of June 30, 2001. 1,232 Year 3 Forms 465 had been received, of which approximately 70 percent were filed electronically. All forms have been initially reviewed with 421 packets completely process and funding commitment totaling \$4,444,941 issued. The number of Year 4 Forms 465 that have been submitted is 1,233. Year 4 demand will be approximately 50 percent higher than demand in Year 3 for a total demand of \$13.815 million. The total projected funding requirement for the Rural Health Care Support Mechanism for 4th Quarter 2001 is \$4.298 million.

On a motion duly made and seconded, the Committee adopted the following resolution:

RESOLVED, That the USAC Rural Health Care Committee, having reviewed at its meeting on July 23, 2001, a summary of the 4th Quarter 2001 support mechanism estimates, including

administrative costs provided in Attachment A, hereby directs USAC staff to proceed with the required August 2, 2001, filing to the FCC on behalf of the Committee.

a5. Miscellaneous. None

INFORMATION ITEMS:

- i1. **Rural Health Care Support Mechanism Update.** Mr. Blackwell gave the Committee an update on the NECA/NCS Transition, FCC Evaluation of Rural Health Care Support Mechanism, and the outreach support.
- i2. **Status of Appeals.** Mr. Blackwell reported that between April 1 and June 30, 2001, Rural Health Care Division received three new letters of appeal. One appeal was denied, one appeal was approved, and one appeal was approved in part. One appeal from a previous quarter is pending before the FCC.
- i3. **Rural Health Care Beneficiaries Audit Status.** Mr. Blackwell reported that USAC's independent auditor has incorporated portions of the beneficiary audit into their overall review of USAC's internal controls and operations. The final audit report is scheduled for completion in October 2001.
- i4. **Rural Health Care Support Mechanism Timeline and Key Dates.** No discussion. For information only.
- i5. **Miscellaneous.** None.

There being no further business to attend to, Dr. Sanders adjourned the meeting at 3:20 p.m.

D. Scott Barash

Assistant Secretary

Date

072301RHCmin

UNIVERSAL SERVICE ADMINISTRATIVE COMPANY

Rural Health Care Committee Meeting

October 22, 2001

MINUTES

The quarterly meeting of the Rural Health Care Committee of the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) Board of Directors was held at The Westin Grand, 2350 M Street, NW, Washington, D.C., on Monday, October 22, 2001. Dr. Jay Sanders, Chair of the Committee, called the meeting to order at 2:30 p.m. Eastern Time. Ms. Ann Simmons, Administrative Assistant for USAC, called the roll on behalf of Mr. D. Scott Barash, Assistant Secretary. Seven of the eight members were present, representing a quorum:

Hogerty, Martha – <i>by telephone</i>	Rivera, Robert
Jackson, Jimmy	Sanders, Dr. Jay
Lineberry, Isiah – <i>by telephone</i>	Thoms, Allan
Parrino, Cheryl	

One member was absent:

Talbott, Dr. Brain

Other Board members and officers of the Corporation present:

Gumper, Frank – Board member

Buller, Karen – Board member

Barash, D. Scott – Assistant Secretary

Haga, Robert – Assistant Treasurer

Others present for the meeting:

NAME	COMPANY
Blackwell, Mel	USAC
England, Bill	USAC
Faunce, Donna	USAC
Johnson, Eric	FCC
Jose, Stephanie	USAC

ACTION ITEMS:

- a1. **Approval of the Minutes.** On a motion duly made and seconded, the Committee approved the minutes as distributed of the Rural Health Care Committee meeting of Monday, July 23, 2001.
- a2. **Acceptance of USAC 2001 Agreed Upon Procedures Report of Beneficiaries of the Rural Health Care Support Mechanism.** Mr. Haga reported that the internal audit staff has completed the 2001 audit of the Rural Health Care Support Mechanism beneficiaries and has finalized the report. Year 2 covered the 12-month period from July 1, 1999, to June 30, 2000. Mr. Haga noted that the report revealed no significant findings or issues concerning Rural Health Care Support Mechanism beneficiaries.

On a motion duly made and seconded, the Committee adopted the following resolution:

RESOLVED, That the USAC Rural Health Care Committee accepts the 2001 Agreed Upon Procedures Report of Rural Health Care Support Mechanism beneficiaries.

- a3. **Approval of the Rural Health Care Support Mechanism Year 5 Application Filing “Window” Length.** Mr. Blackwell reported that the target date for opening Year 5 application filing window is January 28, 2002. The proposed 70-day filing window is consistent with the window length approved last year. It is not expected that applications will exceed the cap, so the window is not likely to serve as a limitation on applicants’ ability to obtain support. Nevertheless, the Committee is required under FCC regulations to establish a filing window for applications.

On a motion duly made and seconded, the Committee adopted the following resolution:

RESOLVED, That the USAC Rural Health Care Committee approves establishing a 70-day window for the filing of Forms 466/468 for the 2002-2003 funding year.

- a4. **Approval of 1st Quarter 2002 Rural Health Care Programmatic Budget and Information on Estimated 2002 Annual Budget.** Ms. Faunce stated that the Committee must approve a 1st Quarter 2002 programmatic budget for the Rural Health Care Support Mechanism to include in the November 2001 FCC filing. USAC staff is providing an estimated 2002 annual budget at this time, and will present the final 2002 annual budget to the Committee at its January 2002 meeting. Ms. Faunce then reviewed the information in Attachments A, B, and C of the issue paper.

On a motion duly made and seconded, the Committee adopted the following resolution:

RESOLVED, That the USAC Rural Health Care Committee approves a 1st Quarter 2002 Rural Health Care Support Mechanism budget of \$606,300.

- a5. **Approval of 1st Quarter 2002 Rural Health Care Projections and Resolution on the November 2, 2001, FCC Filing.** Mr. Blackwell reported to the Committee that Year 2 is very close to being finalized. The Year 3 period for filing requests for support opened on March 30, 2000, and closed on June 30, 2001. Over 1,323 Year 3 Forms 465 have been received by USAC, of which approximately 70 percent were filed electronically. USAC projects that Year 3 demand for support will be approximately \$8.171 million. The Year 4 application-filing window opened on March 26, 2001, and 1,596 Forms 465 have been submitted. Mr. Haga reported that while adjustments have been minimal, staff is recommending a variance threshold within which staff may make adjustments to the demand level to allow for the accurate reflection of demand, adjustments, and interest projections in the filing. USAC established variance thresholds for the revenue contribution base and the High Cost and Low Income Support Mechanisms last year. A revised issue paper containing amended resolutions to address this recommendation was distributed to the Committee.

On a motion duly made and seconded, the Committee adopted the following resolutions:

RESOLVED, That the USAC Rural Health Care Committee authorizes USAC staff to file Rural Health Care Support Mechanism requirement amounts with variances not exceeding a total of \$0.5 Million of the Committee-approved support amounts; and

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the USAC Rural Health Care Committee requires the approval of the Committee Chair for variances over \$0.5 million but not more than \$1.0 million. Any variances above \$1.0 million must have full Committee approval before staff submits the filing to the FCC; and

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the USAC Rural Health Care Committee, having reviewed at its meeting on October 22, 2001, a summary of the 1st Quarter 2002 support mechanism estimates, including administrative costs provided in Attachment A, hereby directs USAC staff to proceed with the required November 2, 2001, filing to the FCC on behalf of the Committee.

- a6. **Miscellaneous.** None

INFORMATION ITEMS:

- i1. **Rural Health Care Support Mechanism Update.** Mr. Blackwell stated that in order to provide better customer service and reduce costs, the Rural Health Care Division (RHCD) has designed and will soon implement a mechanism with which applicants may submit certifications of certain program forms electronically. The new system will also allow applicants who have manually signed and submitted a Form 465 in a previous year to participate in electronic certification, and

will allow applicants to post automatically and receive instant verification of their application being posted to the RHCD web site.

- i2. **Status of Appeals.** Mr. Blackwell reported that between July 1 and September 30, 2001, the Rural Health Care Division received two new letters of appeal. One appeal was approved, and one appeal is pending. Neither appeal raised novel issues regarding the administration of the Rural Health Care Support Mechanism. One appeal from a previous quarter is pending before the FCC.
- i3. **Rural Health Care Support Mechanism Timeline and Key Dates.** No discussion. For information only.
- i4. Miscellaneous.
 - **Videotape on Telemedicine.** Mr. Bill England showed a video on telemedicine for the Committee's viewing.

There being no further business to attend to, Dr. Sanders adjourned the meeting at 3:20 p.m.

D. Scott Barash

Assistant Secretary

Date

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