The Digital Divide and Telehealth

October 5, 2021
Welcome and Introduction to the Webinar

Mei Wa Kwong, JD
Executive Director
Center for Connected Health Policy
About the California Telehealth Policy Coalition

Please visit our website for more information or if you are interested in joining.
https://www.cchpca.org/about/projects/california-telehealth-policy-coalition
Thank you to today’s sponsors
Purpose and key objectives of today’s webinar

Discuss importance of broadband in terms of access to telehealth services and state broadband investments and impacts on the digital divide and telehealth.

- **Provide an overview of broadband legislation**, including the budget trailer bill and additional legislative activity.
- **Discuss stakeholder perspectives and the impact on patients** and what investments mean for future of broadband and telehealth.
- **Panelist discussion** on legislation, ongoing considerations, and next steps.
- **Answer key questions** about the bills and the future outlook for the digital divide and telehealth in California.
Welcome
• Mei Wa Kwong, Executive Director, Center for Connected Health Policy

Broadband Legislation Overview
• Amy Durbin, Policy Advisor, Center for Connected Health Policy

Panelist Session – Opening remarks followed by discussion
• Moderated by Fabiola Carrion, Interim Director, Reproductive and Sexual Health, National Health Law Program

Speakers
• Marissa Kraynak, Director of Health Policy Research, Insure the Uninsured Project
• Vinhcent Le, Legal Counsel & Policy Manager, Greenlining Institute
• Geoff Neill, Legislative Representative, California State Association of Counties
• Jorge Pacheco, Digital Equity Research & Advocacy Specialist, Community Health Partnerships

Q&A

Attendees will remain muted during the webinar.

Please submit any questions you have during the webinar in the Q&A box, not the chat box.
Overview of Broadband Basics and CA Legislation

Amy Durbin, MPPA
Policy Advisor
Center for Connected Health Policy
Broadband Basics

COVID-19 Highlighted Necessity of Internet Access

- Health care services
  - Many telehealth modalities and connected devices require high-speed internet access
- Other services impacted including education, government services, employment

Digital Divide – Many Communities Lack Sufficient Internet Access

- Affordability
  - Internet & connected devices
- Accessibility
  - Lack of broadband infrastructure (fiber, cable, DSL)
  - Low bandwidth, speed
- Digital Literacy
  - Familiarity with internet and connected devices
SB 156 – Broadband Budget Trailer Bill

This bill implements the first year of a three-year $6 billion investment in the broadband. Funding appropriated in SB 129 (Skinner) as amended by AB/SB 164 provides $4.372 billion ($3.25 billion General Fund) in 2021-22 to begin this project. This includes:

**Middle Mile Broadband Infrastructure**: $3.25 billion federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds for the construction of a state-owned open-access broadband middle mile, appropriated in 2021-22.

- Prioritizes build out in areas underserved by internet service providers (ISPs)
- Requires the middle-mile network to be leased for less than fair market value
- Establishes the position of Deputy Director for Broadband and the Office of Broadband and Digital Literacy to oversee project

**Broadband Last Mile Support**: $2 billion ($928 million General Fund and $1.072 billion federal ARPA) for last mile funding, of which $1.072 billion is available in 2021-22, $125 million is available in 2022-23, and $803 million is available in 2022-24.

- Funds CASF through the Broadband Infrastructure Grant Account Program and requires $1 billion to be spent in rural counties and $1 billion to be spent in urban counties
- Redefines “unserved area” as not receiving 25/2 mbps
- Updates speed requirements for infrastructure projects to be at least 100/20 mbps or must current speed set by FCC

**Loan Loss Reserve**: $750 million General Fund for the loan-loss reserve, of which $50 million in appropriated in 2021-22, $125 million is appropriated in 2022-23 and the balance of $575 million is included in 2023-24.

- Allows counties to acquire funding for the acquisition, construction and improvement of broadband infrastructure and operate a broadband service

*Signed by Governor Newsom on July 20, SB 156 Bill Language: https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=202120220SB156*
Other State Policy Updates

- **California Broadband Council**
  - Published the [Broadband Action Plan 2020: California Broadband for All](#)

- **California Public Utilities Commission**
  - Soliciting input on [Proceeding R2009001](#) for middle mile network build-out and how to prioritize projects including healthcare facilities

- **Middle Mile Broadband Advisory Committee**
  - Recently established to monitor the development and construction of the state-owned middle-mile fiber optic cable network
  - Published initial proposal for middle mile network funded under SB 156 and adopted guiding principles

- **California Office of Broadband and Digital Literacy**
  - Recently created within the California Department of Technology to promote broadband deployment in un/under-served areas, encourage digital literacy
## Additional California Broadband Bills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bill No.</th>
<th>Coalition Support?</th>
<th>Recent Developments</th>
<th>Brief Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>AB 14</strong> (Aguiar-Curry et al.)</td>
<td>✅</td>
<td>At Governor’s Desk</td>
<td>Extends the California Advanced Services Fund (CASF) program to encourage deployment of broadband service to unserved Californians. Also revises the surcharge collection methodology for interconnected Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) service and the Deaf and Disabled Telecommunications Program (DDTP).</td>
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<td><strong>SB 4</strong> (Gonzalez)</td>
<td>✅</td>
<td>At Governor’s Desk</td>
<td>Extends the operation of the California Advanced Services Fund (CASF) through 2032, increases the annual funding cap for the CASF, and expands projects eligible for CASF grants to include fund broadband deployment at unserved locations used for emergency response.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>SB 28</strong> (Caballero)</td>
<td>✅</td>
<td>At Governor’s Desk</td>
<td>Expands the authority of the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) to collect data to enforce requirements for cable franchises and authorizes the CPUC to set customer service requirements for cable providers.</td>
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<td><strong>AB 537</strong> (Quirk)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Signed by Governor 10/4</td>
<td>Requires that the time period for city/county approval of collocation or siting applications for wireless telecommunications facilities be deemed approved if the city/county fails to approve within the standard set by the FCC.</td>
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<td><strong>SB 378</strong> (Gonzalez)</td>
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<td>At Governor’s Desk</td>
<td>Requires local governments to allow fiber installers to use microtrenching as a method for installing fiber unless the local government makes a specified finding that permitting microtrenching would adversely impact public health and safety.</td>
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<td><strong>SB 556</strong> (Dodd)</td>
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<td>Vetoed by Governor 10/4</td>
<td>Establishes permitting requirements for the placement of small wireless facilities on street light and traffic signal poles owned by local governments, including specified timelines for approving and attaching infrastructure, limitations on fees for attachments, and restrictions on local governments’ ability to prohibit small wireless facility attachments.</td>
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Additional Resources

ITUP Resources

Telehealth and COVID-19

Broadband for Health Basics

Greenlining Resources

Digital Inclusion Program; Reasons for Digital Divide

COVID-19 Report

CA Telehealth Policy Coalition

Resources website

California Research Bureau

https://www.library.ca.gov/Content/pdf/crb/reports/Broadband_in_California_May_%202021.pdf

Community Networks Fact Sheets and Other Resources

https://muninetworks.org/content/resources

Electronic Frontier Foundation Key Terms

PANEL SESSION

Moderated by Fabiola Carrion
Interim Director, Reproductive and Sexual Health
National Health Law Program
PANELISTS

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*Insure the Uninsured Project*

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Community Health Partnerships
PANEL DISCUSSION

Moderator:
• Fabiola Carrion, Interim Director, Reproductive and Sexual Health, National Health Law Program

Panelists:
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Facilitated question and answer

Please submit your questions in the Q&A box.
Upcoming California Telehealth Policy Coalition Events

Save the Dates
Policy Briefing and Annual Meeting

Policy Briefing
October 15, 11am-12:30pm

2021 Annual Meeting
“Bridge to a Stronger Health System”

- Tuesday, November 2, 2021
- 9am-2pm
- Virtual event
- Event information and registration forthcoming
Thank you to today’s sponsors

Contact staff with any questions:
Mei Kwong
meik@cchpca.org

Amy Durbin
amyd@cchpca.org

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