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AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION,
AND FORESTRY
VETERANS' AFFAIRS
HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR,
AND PENSIONS
JOINT ECONOMIC COMMITTEE

April 8, 2020

Mr. Timothy Strachan
Director, Office of Legislative Affairs
Federal Communications Commission
445 Twelfth Street, SW, Room 8-C453
Washington, D.C. 20554

RE: COVID-19 Telehealth Program

Dear Mr. Strachan:

I am writing regarding the Augusta University Health System (AU Health) and its application for grant funding for its Low-Cost COVID-19 Telehealth Screening Program to support health care providers in the fight against the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Founded in 1828, Augusta University is home to the Medical College of Georgia, located in Augusta, and is Georgia's only public medical school and one of the state's few Academic Health Centers. As an academic medical center, AU Health has a threefold mission: to provide exceptional patient care, to foster medical education and training, and to conduct leading edge biomedical research. As we move through the phases of this COVID-19 pandemic, we need a method to differentiate different types of respiratory diseases in the prehospital phase of care, before entrance into the emergency department, when placing patients into geographic COVID-19 wards in the hospital, and a method to remotely radiographically evaluate patients with the disease for improvement or progression with treatment. AU Health is requesting grant funding for its Low-Cost COVID-19 Telehealth Screening Program. The goal of this program is the rapid expansion of an educational program to the clinical triage, evaluation, and monitoring of COVID-19 infected patients to conserve hospital resources – including health care staff and PPE – through remote evaluation of patients using telemedicine equipped portable ultrasound technology.

In respect for your established policies and procedures, I request that you give the Augusta University Health System your consideration for this grant funding. I would also appreciate you keeping my office informed of the progress of this application and any grants awarded under this funding title. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact my Grants Director Maureen Rhodes at (770) 661-0999.

Sincerely,



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May 21, 2020

Mr. Timothy Strachan
Director, Office of Legislative Affairs
Federal Communications Commission
445 Twelfth Street, SW, Room 8-C453
Washington, D.C. 20554

RE: COVID-19 Telehealth Program

Dear Mr. Strachan:

I am writing regarding Augusta University and its application for grant funding through the COVID-19 Telehealth Program to support health care providers in the fight against the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Founded in 1828, Augusta University is home to the Medical College of Georgia, located in Augusta, and is Georgia's only public medical school and one of the state's few Academic Health Centers. As an academic medical center, AU Health has a threefold mission: to provide exceptional patient care, to foster medical education and training, and to conduct leading edge biomedical research. Beginning March 13, 2020, Augusta University initiated an app-based telemedicine system to screen Georgia residents for COVID-19, and to date over 14,000 Georgia residents have had a telemedicine visit via this system. Augusta University is requesting grant funding to expand the current telemedicine program to its Chronic Disease Management program, specifically targeting those at most risk for severe COVID-19 illness, using internet connected devices (pulse oximeter, pulse rate, and respiratory rate) to remotely monitor patients for onset of COVID-19 disease and worsening chronic medical conditions. This program's objective is to decrease exposure of the health system's most vulnerable population to hospital-acquired COVID-19. By extending telemedicine to the whole cohort of patients in the Chronic Disease Management program, which is 2400 people, Augusta University aims to have a decreased admission rate and emergency department utilization rate by 20% from current rates.

In respect for your established policies and procedures, I request that you give Augusta University your consideration for this grant funding. I would also appreciate you keeping my office informed of the progress of this application and any grants awarded under this funding title. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact my Grants Director Maureen Rhodes at (770) 661-0999.

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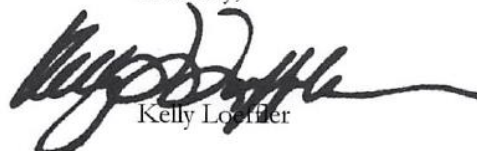
Dear Mr. Strachan:

I am writing regarding Augusta University and its application for grant funding through the COVID-19 Telehealth Program to support health care providers in the fight against the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Augusta University is home to the Medical College of Georgia and is Georgia's only public medical school and one of the state's few Academic Health Centers. As an academic medical center, AU Health has a threefold mission: to provide exceptional patient care, to foster medical education and training, and to conduct leading edge biomedical research. The Department of Emergency Medicine has an active emergency medicine residency training program and an active ultrasound education program with both medical student and residency training programs in point of care ultrasound (POCUS). Augusta University is requesting grant funding to purchase equipment to provide diagnostic services to possible and confirmed COVID-19 patients using broadband-connected, telemedicine-integrated POCUS. Through the use of this technology, patients with respiratory and other COVID-19-like symptoms can be radiologically evaluated to aid in diagnosis and guide therapeutic interventions. As part of the Medical College of Georgia's educational program, students will soon be deployed in communities with high COVID-19 prevalence (safely allowed by local and national guidelines and regulations). These students are already extensively trained in bedside ultrasound and will operate the devices and perform ultrasound imaging, transmitting the images, patient video, performer video and audio, real-time via built-in telemedicine. The real-time imaging from community facilities will be live streamed to main campus-based imaging experts to provide consultation in real time or automatically uploaded for asynchronous consultation and interpretation services.

In respect for your established policies and procedures, I request that you give Augusta University your consideration for this grant funding. I would also appreciate you keeping my office informed of the progress of this application and any grants awarded under this funding title. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact my Grants Director Maureen Rhodes at (770) 661-0999.

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