



*Representing Kentucky Hospitals and Health Systems*

October 12, 2020

RE: Pole Attachment Regulations

Dear Kentucky Public Service Commissioners,

The COVID-19 pandemic has magnified the important role that internet access plays in our daily lives. Kentuckians are working, learning, and connecting with family and friends from home. Notably, more and more Kentuckians are also receiving critical health care services online, but far too many Kentuckians – particularly those in rural communities – still do not have the high-speed internet access necessary to utilize telehealth services that have proven so important in keeping Kentucky healthy.

As the representative of hospitals, health care organizations, and integrated health care systems all across the Commonwealth, we at the Kentucky Hospital Association have heard countless stories about how our health care system's robust new telehealth services have acted as an important lifeline during the pandemic. We need to ensure that all Kentuckians have access to these critical telehealth services, and the Kentucky Public Service Commission (PSC) has the opportunity to help bridge this digital divide.

Importantly, addressing the social determinants of health is a critical component to achieving strong health outcomes. Access to broadband internet is a leading indicator in the overall health of an individual, providing access to education and economic opportunities.

As the Commission actively examines a new regulatory proposal for pole attachments, we encourage you to help speed the deployment of rural broadband and break down barriers for providers seeking to attach internet cables to utility poles. A favorable result from the PSC to provide faster access to utility poles and address high costs related to these attachments will benefit the thousands of rural Kentuckians that our member hospitals serve.

We urge the PSC to quickly establish policies and guidelines that would help connect more unserved Kentuckians all across the Commonwealth to the critical services that keep our state healthy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nancy Galvagni". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

President and CEO