

# United States Senate

June 30, 2015

Shawn B. Arner, Deputy Assistant Administrator  
Loan Origination and Approval Division  
Rural Utilities Service  
STOP 1597, Room 2808  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20250-1597

Dear Mr. Arner,

I am writing on behalf of the USDA Distance Learning and Telemedicine Grant, CFDA 10.855, RUS-15-01-DLT, application submitted by Providence Montana Health Foundation on behalf of St. Patrick Hospital.

If successful, funds will be used by St. Patrick Hospital to purchase equipment necessary to build the Western Montana Telepsychiatry Network – a partnership between St. Patrick Hospital and rural Montana hospitals. Many of Montana's rural and frontier counties are considered to be Health Professional Shortage Areas for mental health professionals. By providing access to high-quality behavioral health professionals and services through telepsychiatry and distance learning, St. Patrick Hospital can address the behavioral health needs of rural hospitals and clinics, care providers, and patients.

Telepsychiatry is a timely, realistic, and cost-effective way for hospitals and clinics in Montana's rural and frontier counties to access needed high-quality behavioral health care for patients who, otherwise, would not obtain care or would have to travel great distances for care.

I trust you will give this grant proposal fair and thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,



Steve Daines  
United States Senator