



National Alliance of
Medical Researchers & Teaching Physicians

January 28, 2002

Michael K. Powell
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

Re: (Proceeding 01-348)

Dear Mr. Powell:

As the power and versatility of broadband technology become more apparent, so does its potential to provide access to high-quality health care through applications of telemedicine. That's why I urge you to grant speedy approval to the proposed merger of satellite TV carriers EchoStar and DIRECTV.

While I am generally aware of the competitive benefits this merger would bring to the pay-TV market, the membership of the National Alliance of Medical Researchers and Teaching Physicians enthusiastically supports this merger on the basis of what it could do for telemedicine alone. Telemedicine is not a new concept. The medical profession has long recognized the value of being able to examine patients, review test results and in some cases even provide treatment over long distances via broadband, multimedia connections.

Where telemedicine applications have been tried, results have been dramatically successful. Like so many other advanced telecom services, however, telemedicine has been sharply limited by the scarcity of affordable broadband connections, especially on local telephone networks.

The EchoStar-DIRECTV merger would solve that problem by making broadband easily accessible from every home in every suburb, rural county and inner-city neighborhood in America. The "Digital Divide" would shrink from a chasm to a small fissure.

The evidence that this merger is in the public interest is powerful and varied. You would be meeting your public responsibility, however, even if you approved the merger solely on the basis of its effect on America's ability to benefit from telemedicine.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

David Charles, MD