

From: [Satya Chandragiri](#)
To: [Exhibits JSCVR](#)
Cc: [Sen Boles](#); [Sen Roblan](#); [Stice Jeanine](#)
Subject: COVID 19 Digital access as equity
Date: Thursday, March 19, 2020 8:35:02 AM

Honorable Chair and members of the committee,
I am a Board Certified Psychiatrist in practice for the past 31 years and serving the state of Oregon for nearly two decades. I am also an elected Salem Keizer School Board Director and Legislative and Policy Committee member of Oregon School Board Association, former President of Oregon Psychiatric Association.

As we are going through this extraordinary time due to the pandemic and we are all adjusting to the challenges, I want to thank you for your leadership and all that you are doing. I am serving some of the highest risk Oregonians who have many pre existing chronic health conditions in addition to mental illness, brain trauma, dementia, addiction and various social adversities. I serve from Harney county to Douglas counties. I live in Salem, Oregon.

With the recent changes instituted to facilitate virtual health care visits by the federal government, we have already started to incorporate many changes. I used the information and have started to implement the steps in my private practice location in Salem, Harney county where we have started to ask patients to start using alternatives to coming to our office for visits or even telemedicine, in my ECF (Enhanced Care Facilities) homes in Lane and Douglas counties. We are also working on ways to incorporate virtual visits by ACT (Assertive community treatment) and WRAP around service teams in Harney county and eastern Oregon.

This was the topic I discussed in our Salem Keizer school board meeting last night when discussing COVID 19 and our district.

This COVID 19 has become a stress test for our nation! It is showing us many well meaning policies, laws and statues is more a barrier to serving our community than a help. It has allowed us to give permission to adapt, break barriers and serve those in need.

We are encountering a challenge as we start thinking of telecommuting to work, virtual visits and a way to provide comprehensive digital learning solutions for our schools. It is at the heart of equity in health care, education and other remote working opportunities for those underserved, poor, and marginalized. We are seeing sections of our society not having digital access, access to wifi. In a complex adaptive system such as our Marion county with 42000 students, speaking 90 diverse languages, nearly 70% living in poverty, large homelessness , I suspect access to citywide free hotspots will allow us to bridge this digital divide and allow equitable opportunities. I also suspect if everyone starts to work from home due to social distancing, the existing bandwidth will be overloaded.

I wonder if the lack of digital equity is going to turnout to be a bottle neck in our state even in large cities. For example Boise, Idaho or Seoul, South Korea has citywide wifi access and is designed as a smart city.
It will be worth comparing how digital equity will impact outcomes in COVID 19 pandemics?

In the School board meeting, I raised the question of asking help from Governor Brown

as she has declared emergency to help set up City wide free multiple wifi hotspots especially in sections of the society with poor digital access.

This will serve virtual health care visits and screening, provision of comprehensive distance learning for our students, telecommuting and working from home and accessing to other public services while staying home and social distancing. This will also significantly reduce our carbon footprint as nearly all commuting can be avoided.

Kindly consider this suggestions and pursue this with Governor or our leadership? This is a simple intervention with high return on investment and benefit across multiple outc metrics.

You are welcome to reach me at [503 2699915](tel:5032699915).

Once again, thank you for your leadership and guidance through this extraordinary times. Together we will get through this. Please be safe and healthy. May God Bless you and keep you and your family safe.

Sincerely

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