



Southwest Telehealth Access Grid: An Integrated Interstate Network of Networks Model for Telehealth

**Panel:
“Success
Stories and
Significant
Challenges”**

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**Dale C. Alverson, MD
University of New Mexico
Center for Telehealth and
Cybermedicine Research
<http://portal.swtag.org>
<http://hsc.unm.edu/som/telehealth>**

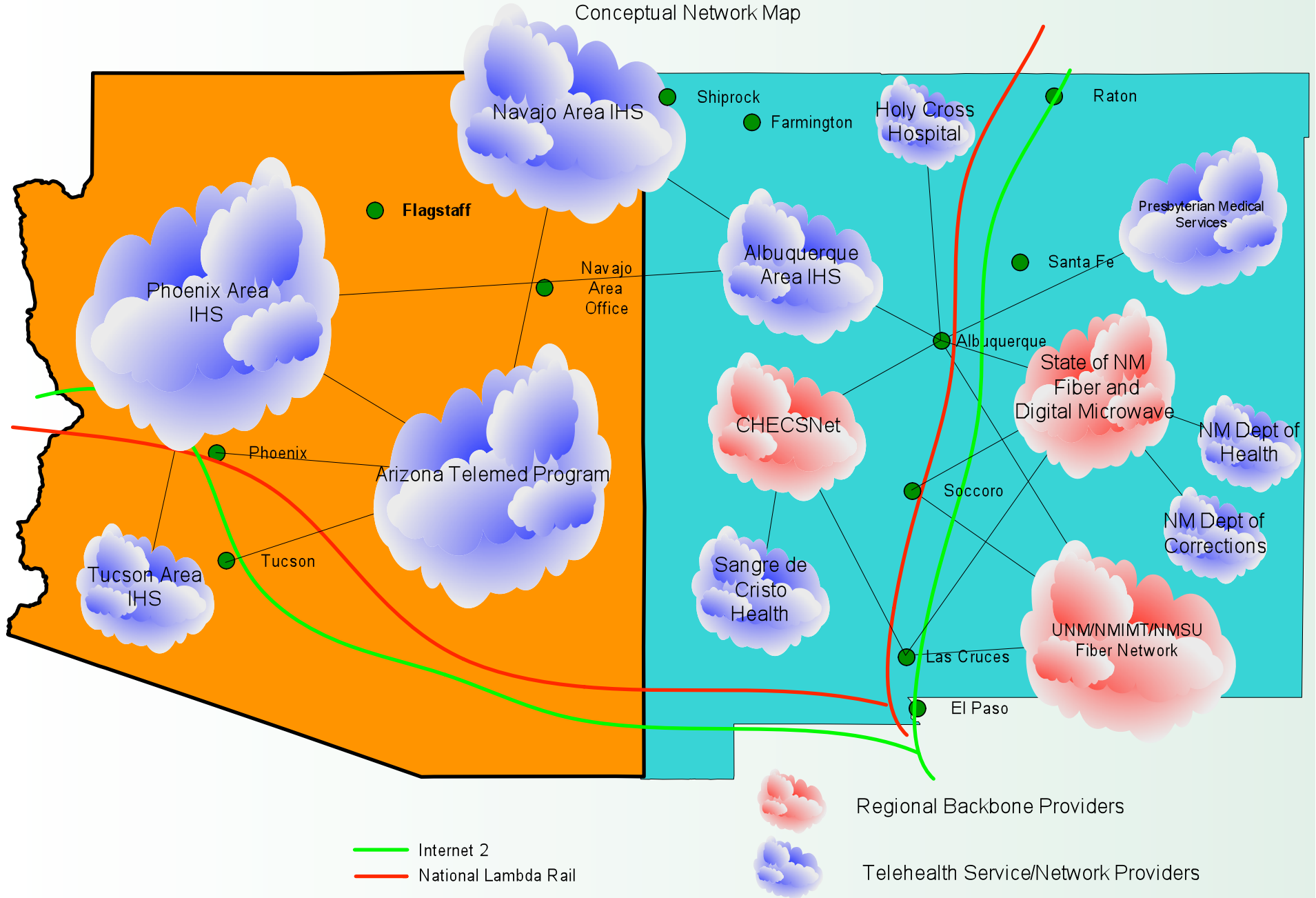


The FCC Rural Health Care Pilot Program



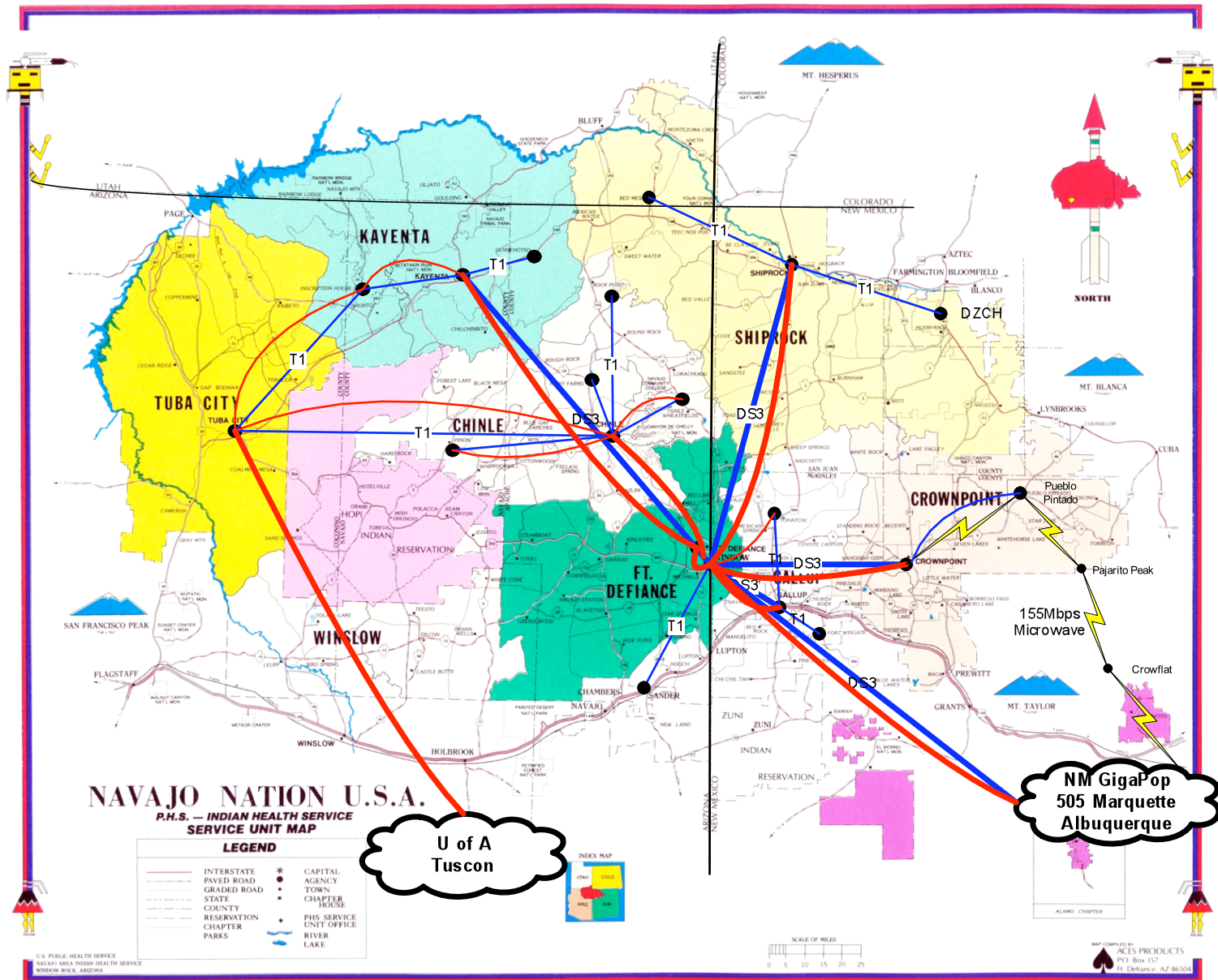
SWTAG is a "Network of Networks"

Southwest Telehealth Access Grid
Conceptual Network Map



Combined Networks

— DS3 ATP — DS3 Data — T1 ATP — T1 Data



The Southwest Telehealth Access Grid (*SW TAG*)

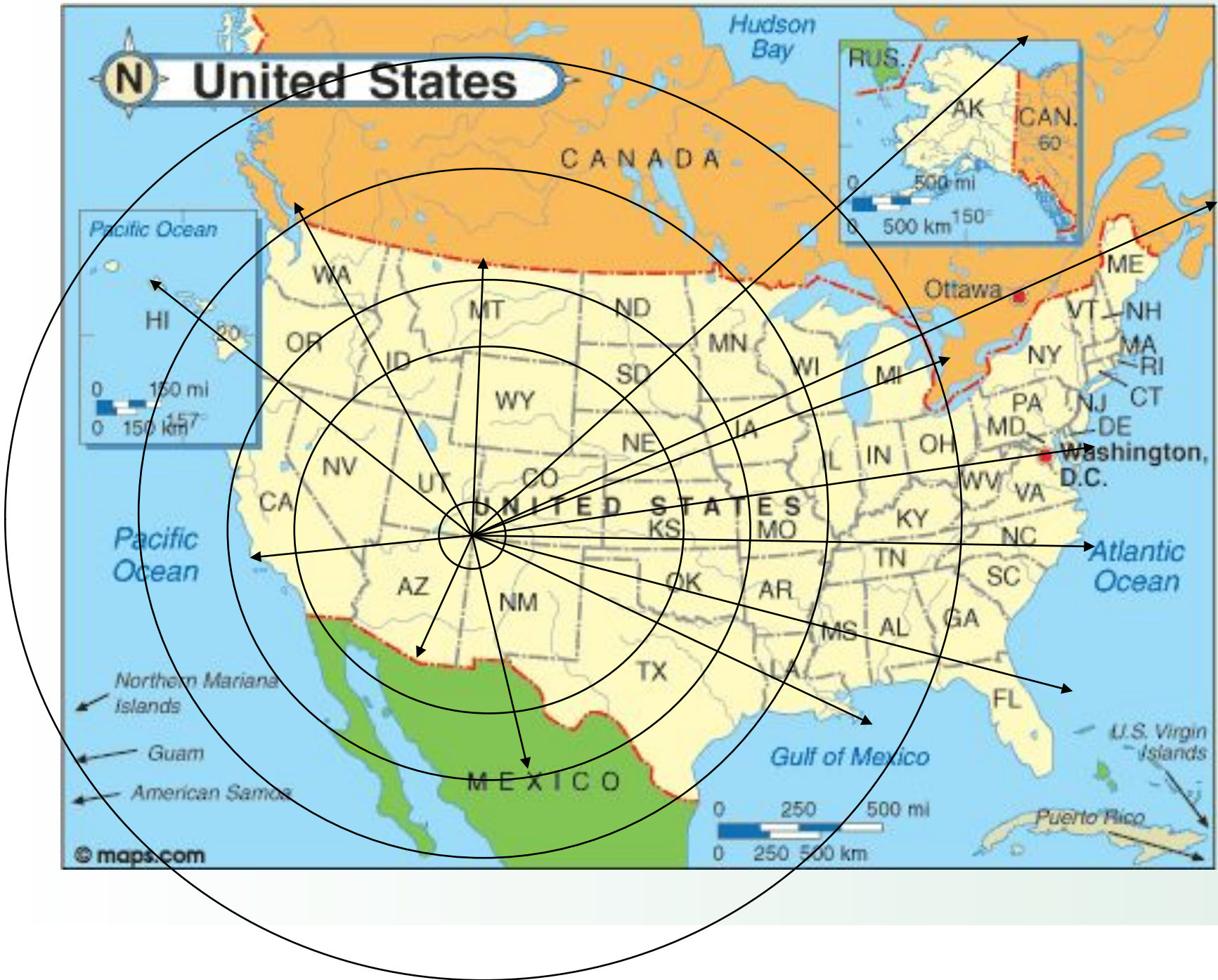
**Comprises 502 sites and 15 stakeholder groups
\$15.5 million awarded over 3 years (FY 2007-2009)**

- **Southwest Indian Health Service (IHS) & Affiliated Tribes**
- **Arizona (ATP)**
- **New Mexico (Public/Private Organizations)**

The Southwest Telehealth Access Grid (*SW TAG*)

Other Regional Funded Projects that overlap

- ***Arizona Tohono O'odham***
- ***Arizona Rural Community Health Information Exchange (ARCHIE)***
- ***Utah***
- ***Colorado***
- ***Texas***
- ***Washington State***
- ***Oregon***
- ***California***



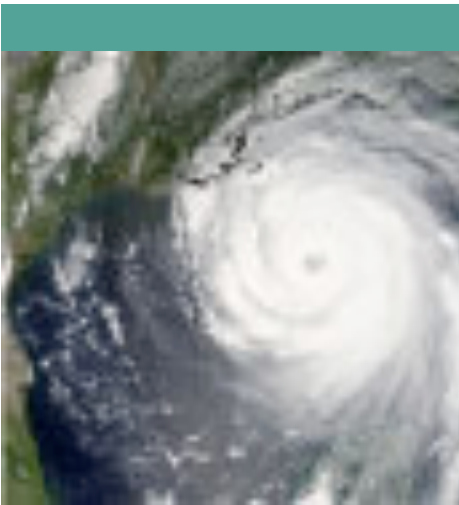
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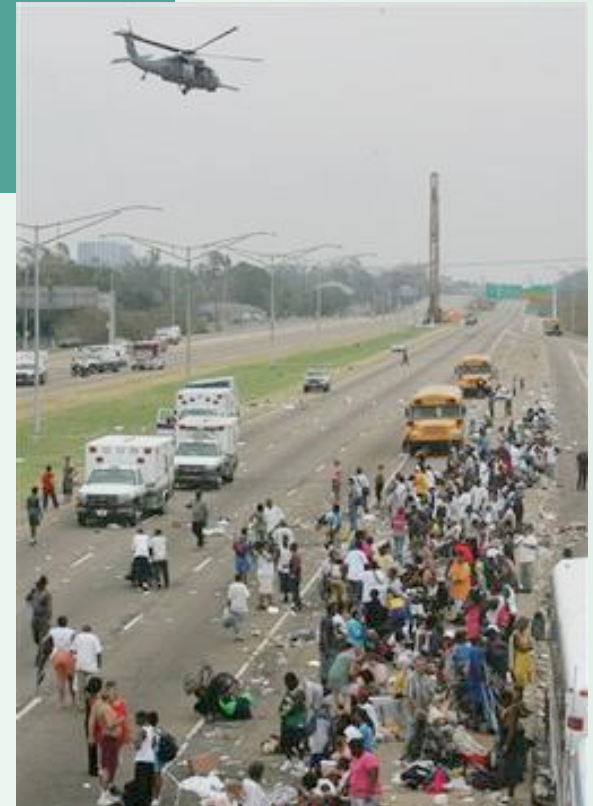


- Northern Mariana Islands
- Guam
- American Samoa

U.S. Virgin Islands

Puerto Rico





FCC RHCPP

➤ **S.W.O.T. Analysis**

Strengths

- Has brought together a transdisciplinary spectrum of public and private stakeholders in the IT, Networking, Health Care Provider and Telehealth domains
- Encourages integration of health information exchange (HIE) that reflects the NHIN and PHIN
- Provides resources (85% of the costs) for designing, building, operating enhanced broadband infrastructure that can support rural telemedicine and health information exchange

Weaknesses

“The Process”

- No funds provided for project management creating challenges in efficient implementation, particularly in complex projects such as the SWTAG
- Cumbersome USAC process not well designed for these types of pilot programs
- Ambiguity in the FCC order and interpretation of the “rules”
- Newly defined requirement for “acceptable” sustainability plans without clear guidance after award announcement

Weaknesses (cont.)

“The Process”

- Budgets are “best guesses” and not based on reality until bids are made and service providers selected (basically award is a “line of credit” toward 85% of cost)
- Lack of coordinated input from organizations representing the Telehealth community; e.g. American Telemedicine Association (ATA), Center for Telehealth and eHealth Law (CTeL), and Office for the Advancement of Telehealth (OAT) and associated national and regional resources centers

Opportunities

- Improved access to telehealth services in remote, rural settings; clinical, education, training and community-based research
- Provides infrastructure to support emerging new information and communication technologies; high definition, wireless
- Develops models for creating a nationwide telehealth/HIE network of networks
- Creates a platform for improved emergency response to national or regional disasters

Opportunities (cont.)

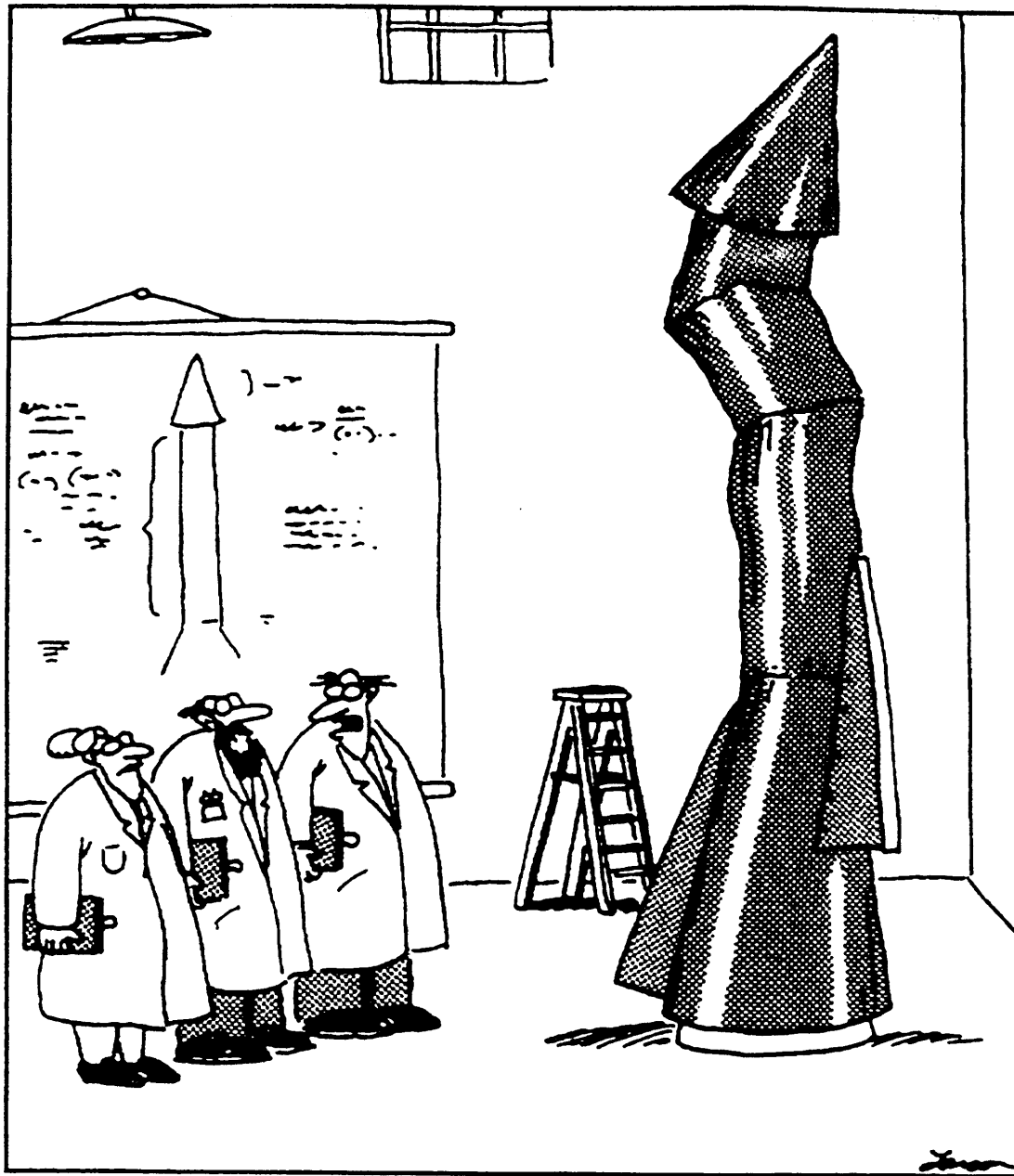
- Provides a network infrastructure that can better leverage and utilize the traditional FCC USAC telemedicine program
- Create alliances with non-health stakeholders to integrate broad-band architecture that addresses other needs of rural communities that fosters economic development; e.g. Department of Information Technology and IT Commission, Education, Libraries, Business Development, and Industry

Threats

- Process so cumbersome and high risk that some stakeholders or even entire projects may drop out
- If traditional USAC program not sustained, some sites may not be able to afford maintaining connection
- Many long-term unknowns with respect to service providers, health care providers and realistic sustainability

Threats (cont.)

- Inability to satisfactorily pass audit
- High risk burden on the Project
Coordinator's primary organization as the single legal and fiscally responsible agent, particularly if one of the stakeholders fails to uphold the rules set forth by FCC, provide the 15% match, or maintain their portion of the network
- ***“Herding Cats”***
- Dwindling cash available for the match



"It's time we face reality, my friends...
We're not exactly rocket scientists."

QUESTIONS?



<http://hsc.unm.edu/som/telehealth>