

Federal Broadband Funding an Academy Advocacy Win More Than 200,000 Michigan Homes Will Gain Access to High-Speed Internet

Michigan received \$1.5 billion in grant funding—the fourth highest in the nation—through the federal Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Program, to expand high-speed internet to unserved and underserved areas across the state. This significant investment will close the “digital divide” for 210,000 more homes in Michigan, which means increased access to healthcare, jobs, and education.

American Academy of Family Physicians has been advocating for expanded national broadband access for quite some time, calling for it to be recognized as a social determinant of health. In 2019, then AAFP President Sterling Ransone, MD [submitted written testimony to Congress and testified during a Senate subcommittee hearing](#) on the importance of affordable, reliable high-speed internet for removing barriers to accessing healthcare and improving health outcomes.

“Having practiced in a rural community for more than 20 years with my wife, who is a pediatrician, I have seen firsthand how telehealth can enhance the patient-physician relationship; increase access to care; improve health outcomes by enabling timely care interventions; and decrease costs when utilized as a component of, and coordinated with, continuous care. Telehealth services during the pandemic have allowed patients and families to maintain access to their usual source of primary care, ensuring care continuity,” Dr. Ransone told the subcommittee.

Michigan is scheduled to begin deploying its funding for expanding high-speed internet in mid-to late-2024. This will ensure that every home in all of Michigan’s 83 counties has broadband access.