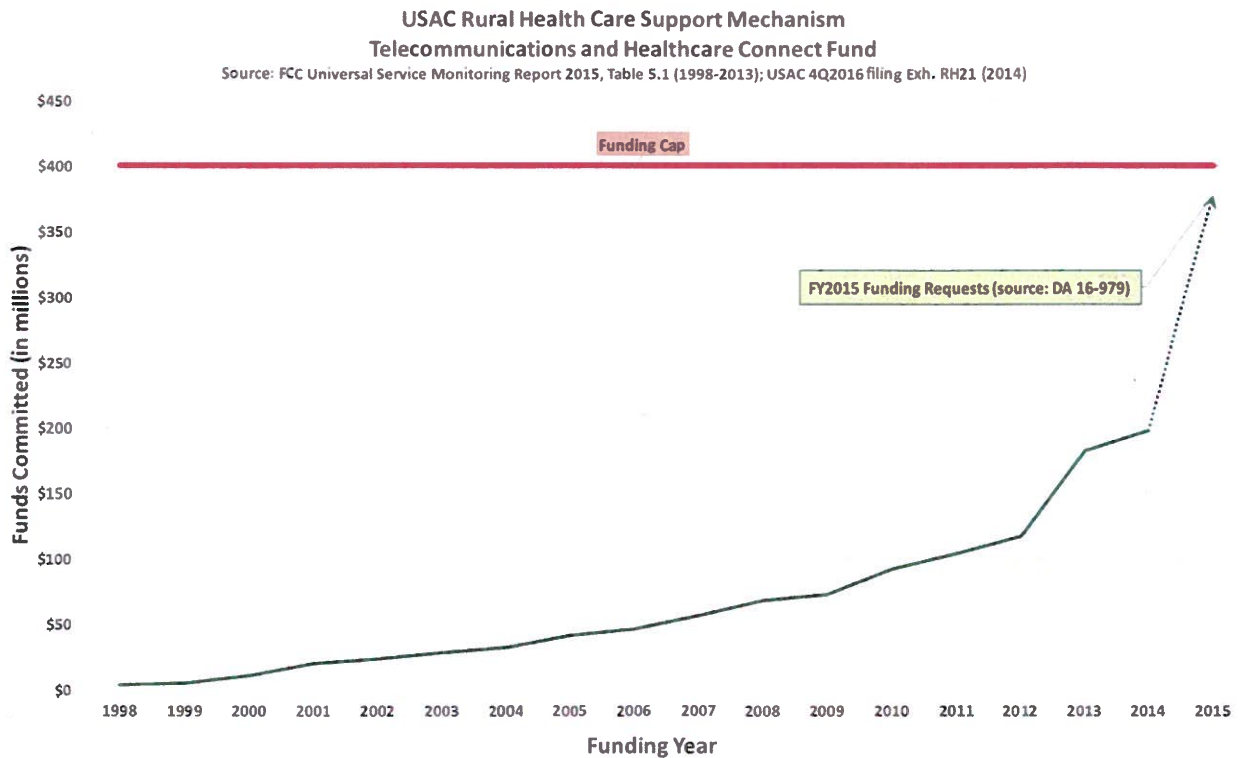
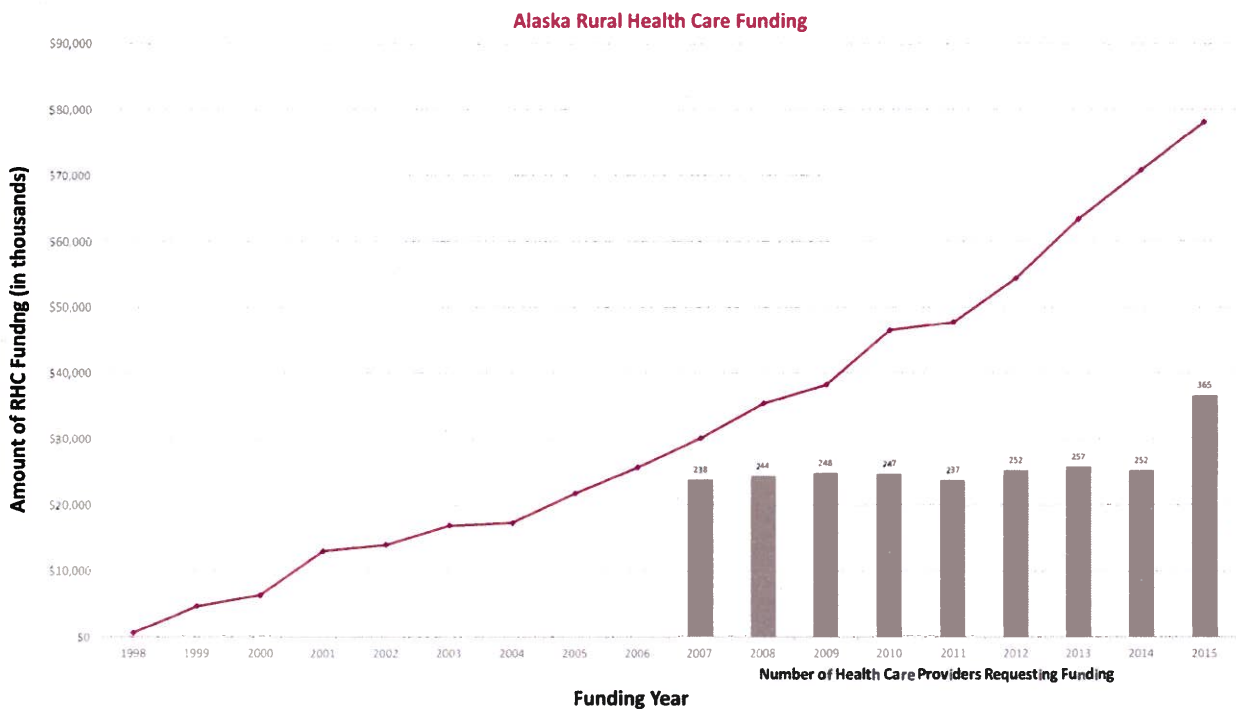


Rural Health Care Universal Service Support in Alaska

- **The Rural Health Care Universal Service Support budget has remained static for 20 years and must be increased:**
 - The current \$400 million budget remains at the initial level set in 1997, despite quantum leaps in technology and demand for services. The FCC expects that demand may exceed the cap for the first time in Funding year 2016.
 - **An equivalent budget today, adjusted for inflation, would be about \$600 million.**

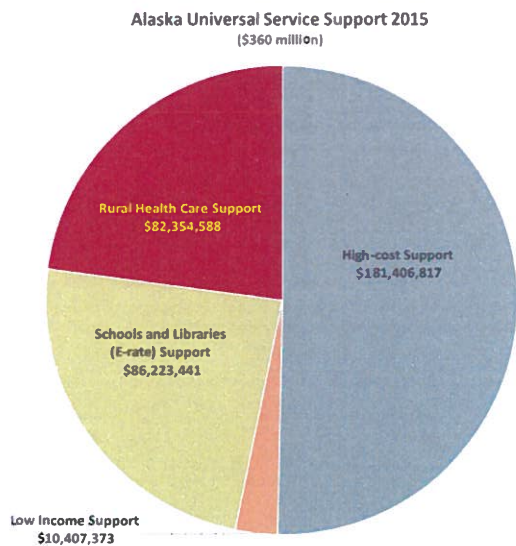


- **Rationing of these funds will disproportionately impair delivery of crucial health care services in Alaska:**
 - Alaska receives a far larger share of rural health care universal service funds than any other state – consistently 30 to 40 percent *or more* of all USAC rural health care funding commitments nationwide.



- Rural Health Care Universal Service Support funding is essential to enable providers to deliver affordable broadband telehealth services in Alaska’s rural and Bush communities:**

- Alaska received more than \$82 million in rural health care support for 2015, a substantial increase from 2014.
 - In 2015, rural health care support was about 23 percent of all federal USF flowing to the state (\$360 million).
 - Together with the E-rate program, rural health care funding enables service providers to deliver affordable broadband Internet access and other services to schools, libraries, and rural health care providers in rural and Bush Alaska that are reasonably comparable to those available in central Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Juneau.
 - Often, these anchor institutions have the only broadband connections in their communities.
 - Today, although per-Mbps bandwidth prices have fallen steadily, demand is soaring, as healthcare organizations increasingly share information among their locations and with others.



- Rural Health Care support enables telehealth implementations that dramatically improve access to care, accelerate treatment, and improve local treatment options:**

- Rural Veterans Health Access Program, behavior health for veterans in rural communities
 - Akeela – tele-behavior health for inmates and community members
 - Kenaitze – Implementing Electronic Health Records and integrating care with the Alaska Native Medical Center

- The FCC should increase the rural health care budget and index it for inflation, as it recently did with E-rate**

- E-rate support is similarly essential in delivering affordable telecommunications services to rural and Bush Alaska
 - E-rate enables rural and Bush schools and libraries to offer e-learning services and cutting-access information that were impossible only a few years ago.
 - Unlike the rural health care mechanism, the FCC has updated the E-rate budget from \$2.25 billion in 1997 to \$3.94 billion for 2016, *and indexed it for inflation*, reflecting increases in demand.

Alaska eRate Funding

