



February 21, 2023

To Whom it May Concern

The Beatrice Community Hospital & Health Center wholeheartedly supports the expansion of broadband services in Gage County, including the community of Cortland.

Digital services have been and continue to be an expanding and invaluable component in the delivery of healthcare.

Access to reliable internet service impacts patient care. It plays a role in patients being able to access telehealth appointments when travel is a burden due to poor health, inclement weather or simply unavailable. Caring for patients during the COVID-19 pandemic made this especially clear to both patients and healthcare providers.

Electronic patient portals provide patients the opportunity to view lab and imaging results, send messages to their providers, manage medication prescriptions and schedule appointments. This simple digital tool allows patients to be proactive in their healthcare, resulting in better quality of life.

Even the simple task of researching information about a new health diagnosis or finding a support community on social media becomes challenging for rural residents without reliable access to the internet.

Healthcare is also facing the same hiring challenges as other industries. Having reliable, quality internet access gives Beatrice Community Hospital and other healthcare organizations the option of being able to offer flexible work-from-home job opportunities in the areas of medical recordkeeping, accounting and data analysis to hardworking employees in smaller communities.

Beatrice Community Hospital & Health Center supports utilizing Capital Projects funds to enable the deployment of broadband infrastructure by Nextlink Internet that would enable residents in the Cortland area to work from home, participate in online education, access health care via telehealth and monitor health conditions through patient portals and other electronic means.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard Haraldson", is written over a light blue rectangular background.

Richard Haraldson, CEO
Beatrice Community Hospital & Health Center