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**DOCKET NO. 44669**

## ORDER APPROVING EXTENSION TO GEORGIA CHARITABLE CARE NETWORK CONTRACT FOR HEARING AID DISTRIBUTION PROGRAM USING TELECOMMUNICATIONS RELAY SERVICE FUNDS

### Background

Pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 46-5-30(c), the Georgia Public Service Commission (the "Commission") entered into a contract with Georgia Charitable Care Network ("GCCN") pursuant to which GCCN purchases and distributes hearing aids to qualifying Georgia residents. On February 6, 2025, GCCN filed a two-year contract extension to its hearing aid contract as stated under Section V.B.

GCCN stated that it has provided services to 115 of Georgia's 159 counties ensuring those in need have access to devices and resources while serving 52 children and 2,023 adults from July 2022 to December 2024. Additionally, it has promoted outreach with community clinics, hospitals, and providers, resulting in awareness of the program and has established partnerships with audiologists, hearing aid dispensers, and suppliers to enhance the quality-of-care management provided to patients.

### Staff Recommendation

Staff recommended that the Commission approve an extension of the existing contract between the Commission and GCCN. The contract is set to expire on May 31, 2025. Staff recommends that the Commission approve an extension of the contract such that it will remain in effect through May 31, 2027.

Staff further recommended the establishment of a seven-member advisory board that will meet twice per year for the hearing aid program. The board members will be selected by the

Commission and will consist of stakeholders from the hearing aid community, such as manufacturers and audiologists. GCCN will designate a representative (either the Account Manager or Outreach/Education Manager) to attend each Advisory Group meeting, to present the results of Georgia Hearing Aid operations at each meeting, and to field questions concerning the information contained in the hearing aid reports.

## Commission Decision

The Commission approves Staff's recommendation to extend GCCN's contract through May 31, 2027 but does not approve the establishment of an advisory board.

**WHEREFORE, IT IS ORDERED,** the Commission approves an extension of the existing contract with Georgia Charitable Care Network, such that the existing contract will remain in effect through May 31, 2027.

**ORDERED FURTHER,** that any application for rehearing, reconsideration or oral argument and any appeal with respect to this Order shall not serve as a supersedeas and shall not stay this Order unless expressly ordered by this Commission.

**ORDERED FURTHER,** that jurisdiction over this matter is expressly retained for the purpose of entering such further Order(s) as the Commission may deem just and proper.

**ORDERED FURTHER,** that all findings, conclusions and decisions contained within this Order are adopted as findings of fact and conclusions of law are decisions of regulatory policy of this Commission.

The above action by the Commission during its Administrative Session on March 18, 2025.

Sallie Tanner
Executive Secretary

3-25-25
Date

Jason Shaw
Chairman

3-25-25
Date