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Falls hospital shares benefits of broadband expansion

Falls hospital to share benefits of expansion

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Medical experts from Cuyahoga Falls, Columbus and Cincinnati joined the governor via video conference on Monday to share how a faster statewide broadband network will boost patient care.

Gov. John Kasich previously announced plans to make a statewide broadband network used by universities, medical centers and businesses 10 times faster.

The expansion uses a fiber optic network operated by OARnet, a member of the Ohio Board of Regents Ohio Technology Consortium.

Under a deal with Cisco and Juniper, the state is investing \$8.1 million to upgrade the existing bandwidth to 100 gigabits per second — a speed that the governor said will allow as many as 8.5 million electronic medical records to be transmitted within a minute.

For hospitals, the increased speed will translate into more opportunities to work together on research and patient care, Kasich said during an appearance at the Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center.

The first phase of the upgrade will happen by June in Cleveland, Columbus, Cincinnati, Dayton and Toledo. The Akron area, along with Athens and Youngstown, will be upgraded by October.

“It’s going to advance our capabilities for new discoveries,” Kasich said. “... Instead of having a two-lane road, we now have a 10-lane highway.”

Dr. Samer Narouze, chairman of the Center for Pain Medicine at Summa Western Reserve Hospital, said the improvement will let him share medical images and large data files with colleagues within seconds, no matter where they are located.

Narouze speaks internationally on the use of ultrasound-guided nerve blocks to treat and diagnose pain.

“Currently, it’s very difficult for us to share the data,” he said. “This will improve our research capabilities.”

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