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Ross, Pike, Vinton to benefit from federal grant
Nearly $14 million will fund health care connections
The Gazette Staff

A health care network that serves Ross, Pike, Vinton and other surrounding counties will receive nearly $14 million to link hospitals through a statewide supercomputer.

The Southern Ohio Healthcare Network will receive $13.9 million over three years for the project, according to the Ohio Supercomputer Center.

The local network — which serves Adams, Athens, Fayette, Gallia, Highland, Hocking, Jackson, Meigs, Morgan, Perry, Pike, Ross, Scioto, Vinton and Washington counties — will link 60 different health care facilities.

"We are delighted to have the opportunity to work with the Ohio Supercomputer Center to build a health care network that will open the world of high-tech medical innovation to all of southern Ohio," said Tom Reid, project director for the Southern Ohio Health Care Network. "The collaborative spirit and technical excellence available to us through our association with OSCnet will provide fundamental support to our efforts, as well as connectivity to the globe."

The grant was provided as part of the Federal Communications Commission's Rural Health Care Pilot Program.

The facilities will connect via Broadband Ohio's backbone to transport data traffic between regions in Ohio, as well as to use OSCnet to access Internet2, the primary national research and education network in the country. This fulfills a key requirement of the grant — that the health care traffic be able to flow across the country from Ohio.

Gov. Ted Strickland issued an executive order in July that paired OSCnet - the nation's leading high-speed, statewide network dedicated to education, research and economic competitiveness - with the NextGen Network, a new state and local government system being developed by acquiring available bandwidth from OSCnet.