

**Telecommunications Access Program (TAP) Advisory Board Meeting**  
**April 19, 2012 @ 2:00 pm**  
**KCDHH Conference Room**

**Members Present:** Ms. Rebecca Crawford, Ms. Mindy McGirt, Mr. Jim Stevens, Mr. Johnny Lawson and Ms. Betty Timon

**Members Absent:** Mr. Louis Fowler, Mr. Forest Skaggs, Ms. Nina Coyer, Mr. Jeremiah Ziehr and Mr. Shannon Caldwell

**Staff Present:** Ms. Virginia Moore, Ms. Rowena Holloway and Ms. Wilma Wright

**Visitors:** Ms. Emma Danielson, Sprint Relay

**Communication Facilitators:** Ms. Shannon Grider and Ms. Traci Lundergan

Ms. Becky Crawford, the newly appointed Telecommunications Access Program (TAP) Advisor Board Chair called the meeting to order at 2:15 pm. Members introduced themselves and the organization or entities they represent. Ms. Wright completed the roll call, and as there was a quorum present, the meeting continued. Minutes from the previous meeting were reviewed, and as there were no comments or additions, they were accepted as read.

Ms. Moore, KCDHH Executive Director, began the meeting by discussing the deaf/blind communicator distributed through the addition of wireless devices to the TAP. Mr. Caldwell will present a demonstration of the equipment at the next TAP Advisory board meeting as he was unable to attend today's meeting. Ms. Moore presented an update regarding the wireless distribution/service plan, the end of the pilot project and ongoing changes within the program. During the last 18 months, the TAP has experienced many changes within the program. Overall, consumers are very satisfied and the inclusion of wireless devices in the program has been a huge success. Many individuals that received equipment now understand the importance of having access to a wireless device and the importance of having communication access during an emergency. The vendor of the majority of the wireless devices, AT&T, had some management changes during the last six months and the new management met with program staff to modify the program agreement moving forward. After the initial plan expires and the consumer transfers to their own plan, a credit check is now

required and consumers can pick from a variety of service plans to meet their needs. This has been a challenge for some consumers, but the transition seems to be going well.

TAP consumers transferring to their own service plan were provided advance notice by both KCDHH and AT&T and a vlog in American Sign Language was loaded to the KCDHH website to explain the changes. Ms. Moore also attended several organization meetings throughout the community to explain the changes face to face with consumers and answer questions from the community. To date, more than 75 percent of consumers receiving equipment have transferred service in their own names once the initial plan expires. Per AT&T executives, this is an excellent record.

AT&T has a plan called the text accessibility plan that runs about the same rate as the initial service plan per month, and documentation was provided to the authorized dealers to verify an individuals' disability to speed up the transfer process. The text accessibility plan with AT&T is data only and we expressed our concerns that this was inequitable to late-deafened adults that need voice minutes to use CapTel services. The AT&T national office indicates they could not change the plan and some consumers may file complaints to request future reconsideration at the national level.

The intent of TAP providing wireless devices continues to be for emergency notifications, as well as providing access to communication. Texting allows individuals a means of contacting someone, but KCDHH continues to work with emergency management organizations to upgrade the 911 system to accept emergency requests via text or videoconferencing applications such as Face Time. With the passage of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Communications Act, states are required to build an infrastructure that will allow 911 to accept these types of communication, but funding of the upgrades continues to be an issue. Sprint has an application that works with their Android devices that does not require the one minute of voice time to access CapTel services, but it does not currently work with the iPhone.

Members were given an opportunity to ask Ms. Moore questions about the changes to TAP ongoing and the transfer process.

Next on the agenda, Ms. Holloway reported on regulation changes recently made to the TAP. A copy of the revised regulations was provided to members. Changes included the addition of Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioners and Internal Medicine doctors as professionals that can verify an applicant's disability and the requirement that an applicant be at least 13 years of age to apply for a wireless device. Other clean-up revisions were made, including how vendors process our orders and clarification that applicants that lose a wireless device are not eligible for reapplication or replacement until four years has passed since receipt.

Forms utilized in the TAP have been revised to include the changes to the wireless portion of the program, with detailed information about what the consumer is to expect when they have to transfer service to their name. The TAP brochure has also been updated and the draft was provided to the board. Comments are to be provided to TAP staff by April 30 so it can be sent to print. The TAP application itself was also updated and was incorporated into the recent regulation changes that became effective March 1.

Ms. Holloway also advised that the contracts with equipment vendors were renewed in May, but new products that would benefit the community can always be added to the contract as needed. Any suggestions should be forwarded to the TAP staff for consideration. Members were given an opportunity to ask questions about the equipment currently provided by TAP and make any recommendations for changes at any time.

TAP served 1,345 consumers during the last calendar year, with approximately 700 of those consumers receiving wireless devices. The TAP annual report is due to the Legislative Research Commission by July 1 and will reflect the program's statistics, financial status and future plans for the upcoming year. The final report is posted to the website after submittal.

Ms. Wright spoke of the location of each of the six demonstration cabinets across the state, with the last one placed in Lexington at the Bluegrass Assistive Technology Center on Southland Drive. Each location includes a phone tester so consumers can make a phone call to see how the device they are considering works for them. AT&T wireless devices are not included in the cabinets and consumers are referred to authorized locations to test the devices before selection. Live Jitterbug phones are available in the demonstration cabinets allowing consumers to see if that device meets their hearing loss needs. Board members were given the opportunity to ask questions about individual devices currently provided.

Ms. Danielson, Kentucky's Relay service representative from Sprint, said she was excited to hear how the Captel phone has changed so many lives and how many consumers are satisfied with the updated versions of the devices now available. Outreach partnerships continue to be conducted with Sprint and other organizations to spread the word about the availability of TAP devices and the program benefits.

Members were asked if there were any other topics for discussion, and, as there were none the meeting was adjourned at 3:45 p.m., Members were reminded to provide travel vouchers to Ms. Wright for processing. The next TAP Advisory Board meeting is scheduled for November 8, 2012 at 2:00 pm at KCDHH.