

Telecommunications Access Program (TAP) Advisory Board Meeting Held May 8, 2009 @ 10:00 am – KCDHH Conference Room

- Members Present:** Dr. Patricia Freeman, Mr. Jim Stevens, Mr. Jeremiah Ziehr, Mr. Bob Stuckey, Mr. Johnny Lawson, Mr. Louis Fowler and Ms. Mindy McGirt
- Members Absent:** Mr. Forest Skaggs and Mr. Shannon Caldwell
- Staff Present:** Ms. Liz Hill, Mr. Cole Zulauf, Ms. Wilma Wright, Ms. Rowena Holloway, and Ms. Virginia Moore
- Communication Facilitators:** Ms. Tammy Cantrell, Ms. Jan Williamson and Ms. Tracy Lundergan

Mr. Stuckey, TAP Advisory Board Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:05 am. Mr. Stuckey introduced Ms. Liz Hill, the new Executive Director for the Kentucky Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (KCDHH). Members and staff introduced themselves and the organization or entities they represent. Mr. Stuckey thanked Mr. Ziehr and Mr. Lawson for agreeing to extend their service on the Telecommunications Access Program (TAP) Advisory Board. Mr. Green resigned from the Board for personal reasons. Mr. Stuckey agreed to continue his service on the Board until 2010 unless his term as a Commissioner ends prior to that date. Dr. Freeman will continue to serve until July 1, 2009 when Ms. Nina Coyer will begin serving as the Chair of the Commission and therefore becomes a member of the TAP Advisory Board. Ms. Wright completed roll call, and as there was a quorum present the meeting continued.

Mr. Zulauf presented the statistical report from July 2007 through April 2009. He stated which equipment seemed to be preferred by consumers and how TTY's have declined in usage as deaf individuals prefer videophones. He summarized usage for the timeframe and explained the recommendation to streamline equipment and offer fewer models to reduce confusion on the consumer's part. Members were given an opportunity to ask questions about the statistical information provided.

Ms. Holloway explained some of the equipment choices for streamlining and discussed KCDHH's position for adding wireless equipment to the TAP. Much research has gone into selecting the equipment distributed, including input from consumers, staff, other state programs and national organizations such as the Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program Administrators (TEDPA), of which Ms. Holloway currently serves as Secretary of the Board. Members were given an opportunity to ask questions about the recommended models. At the end of the next fiscal year (June 2010), vendor contracts will expire and will be rebid. During this upcoming year TAP staff will be taking input and recommendations from consumers and interested parties.

Ms. Moore stated that the TAP offers more choices than other states, and is one of the top programs in the United States for efficiency. When staff attends the National Association of State Relay Administrators (NASRA) and the TEDPA conferences, other state representatives inquire as to how Kentucky runs the TAP so efficiently with so few staff. Ms. Moore explained that some states have a voucher program or a loaner program and ours seems to be more streamlined than either of these styles.

Mr. Stuckey thanked Ms. Moore for the additional information, and then asked for a motion on Ms. Holloway's proposal to streamline the equipment. Mr. Ziehr asked a question about the TTY that will be distributed per the streamlining recommendation and if another version could be requested. Ms. Holloway explained that if a consumer needs more specialized piece of equipment that typically it can be ordered on special request after approval from the Finance department, such as a Braillephone or TTY with a Large Visual Display (LVD). Mr. Lawson (Ms. McGirt) made a motion and seconded to accept the recommendations as presented. Members voted and unanimously passed the recommendation.

Ms. Moore explained to members that KCDHH will have a booth at the KY State Fair in August and the TAP equipment will be displayed at the booth. Equipment is housed in a cabinet at KCDHH for demonstration to consumers. Additional cabinets will be placed in Louisville (Heuser Hearing Institute), Lexington Western and Northern Kentucky (locations TBD) as funds are available to purchase the cabinets and equipment. They will be centered where an audiologist can assist consumers with selecting the appropriated equipment. Members asked about an electronic application and Ms. Holloway explained that the state statutes governing the program mandate a paper application. The law would have to be changed before we could automate the application. Mr. Stuckey asked if there were more questions from members.

Ms. Holloway advised members that the long awaited petition with the Public Service Commission (PSC) was approved on February 16, 2009 and becomes effective June 1, 2009. The PSC order mandates all wireless providers pay the surcharge that supports the TAP, as well as wire line providers. This change will be reflected in an overall reduction in the surcharge from nine cents to four cents per customer. TAP will receive two cents and the Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS) will receive two cents of the surcharge through June 30, 2010, when it reverts back to one cent per KRS 278.5499. Mr. Jim Stevens, of the PSC, was instrumental in working with KCDHH to get the petition passed by the PSC. Emergency regulation amendments have been filed and ordinary are in process, with comments accepted through May 30th. Mr. Skaggs who could not be here this morning has also been instrumental in helping us get the funding mechanism to include wireless providers.

The Request for Purchase (RFP) has been drafted and will be reviewed by the full Commission Board at the July Commission meeting. After comments are incorporated, the RFP will be submitted to Finance for posting for bids. The bid process, interview and final selection is done by a Finance committee and takes approximately three months to complete. We believe a large vendor will win the bid since it includes

administrative processing requirements that cannot be completed by a manufacture or company that only sells equipment. Members asked about the type of wireless device that would be selected and Ms. Moore explained that specifications are included in the RFP and most likely a Blackberry or Sidekick will meet those requirements, but we will not know the exact device until the bid is finalized. Consumers will be updated as more information is available as the state process is quite complicated. We are the first state to propose this new concept of providing equipment and a limited service package and adjustments will need to be made as we proceed. Commissioners and staff will discuss the process in depth at the retreat scheduled for June 5-6.

Ms. Moore advised members that the proposed "package" for the device and the service are equitable to the cost of a CapTel or TTY and will provide access to emergency notification for situations, such as the ice storm that occurred last January. Members were given the opportunity to ask questions and discuss options and the primary concern was provision of 911 services. Once a final proposal is approved it will be announced and board members will be advised of any changes from today's discussion.

Mr. Stuckey mentioned that Mr. Jeff Carroll from Hamilton Relay will be doing a presentation in Louisville May 12th. He asked if anyone had any announcements for the community and asked that member give Ms. Wright their travel vouchers for processing. The next TAP Advisory Board Meeting dates were proposed for October 20, 2009 and April 20, 2010. Members had no conflict so the dates will be added to the agency calendar. Meeting time is from 10 -12 here at KCDHH.

Mr. Stuckey thanked the TAP staff and the board for their hard work to make wireless devices a part of the program and better serve the deaf and hard of hearing population.

Ms. Moore advised that new Directory of Services (DOS) is available for member to take home or take a few for distribution at various meetings they attend.

As there were no more questions, the meeting was adjourned at 11:35 am.