

Relay Missouri Advisory Committee Meeting

April 24, 2018

CART Reporter: Kimberly A. Pfleinger Schacht,  
RPR, CRR, CRC, CCR, CRI

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: Ready, set, go. Good morning, everybody. My name is April Mason Donovan. For those of you who don't know me, I am the Chairperson for Relay Missouri Advisory Council.

STEPHANIE LOGAN: I can't see.

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: Is this better? So we will go ahead and get started. But I would like to do introductions as well, and so we will start over here.

RYAN SMITH: I am Ryan. I am standing in for Hampton Williams. I am an attorney with the Office Of Public Counsel.

OPEOLUWA SOTONWA: Oh, hello. My name is Opeoluwa Sotonwa. I am with the Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

STEPHANIE LOGAN: Hello. My name is Dr. Stephanie Logan. I am the Executive Director of Deaf LEAD.

JOHN VAN ESCHEN: I am John Van Eschen. I am with the Missouri Commission staff.

WHITNEY PAYNE: My name is Whitney Payne, and I am with the Missouri Commission staff as counsel for this committee.

KARI SALSMAN: Kari Salsman, Commission staff.

STACY BRADY: Stacy Brady, Missouri Assistive Technology.

MICHELLE VICINO: Michelle Vicino, I am the Relay Missouri

account manager.

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APRIL MASON DONOVAN: Okay. Since we are waiting on three people to come in, I think we will just go ahead and get started with this meeting if that is all right with everybody here. All right.

So I guess we will go ahead and get started with your presentation, Equipment Program Update.

STACY BRADY: So my presentation is actually pretty short today. We are just going to jump right into the Telecommunications Access Program. I ran the data from July 1st, the state fiscal year, to March 31st of this year. And we have assisted 754 consumers, received 878 devices. By far on the TAP telephone side, the majority of individuals are hard of hearing, followed by vision loss. Physical mobility is at 24, multiple and other, speech, cognitive, learning, and combined vision and hearing. Combined vision and hearing are people who are not classified as deafblind. Most of them will not meet the Helen Keller definition. We will talk about it later on.

For text based items provided through our program we have done 37 CapTels and traditional TTOs, hearing carryover or voice carryover 3. We are pretty much on target from last year.

The biggest thing we see is the Telitalk. I don't have a picture today. I have a couple of consumers in the

Poplar Bluff area that received it. It is an electrolarynx attached to the device or Bluetoothed to the smartphone that allows the user to directly pass the sound quality through the telephone and not through the handset, and I know that sounds extremely complicated. So the device is part of the telephone unit. The Telitalk electrolarynx piece does not work independently. So it avoids the face-to-face communication side that we are not able to do under the equipment program. And they put it up to their vocal area and they are able to resonate the sound through the device into the phone directly to have the sound quality passed. Are there questions about how that works?

We have done one Bluetooth and four desktop. This last week I think I ordered three additional pieces. So we are seeing that population grow, and that has a lot to do with Griffin Laboratories who is aware of our program and is coordinating efforts once they have been approved for it.

Before I change, any questions for TAP For Telephone?

Now we move into TAP Wireless. Same fiscal year, July 1 to March 31. 143 received equipment in TAP Wireless. The majority of our consumers continue to be vision loss on this side. Again, hearing loss we are seeing more and more individuals requesting accessories --

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: There are spots over here guys if you want to come over here.

ADONIS BROWN: Thank you.

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STACY BRADY: Followed by hearing, then we have the speech, mobility, physical, and multiple other. And in this one we are specifying vision and hearing, not deafblind. It is important. If you were at Power-Up -- I am not seeing anyone in here that was -- we laid out the difference between when to apply for TAP for Wireless, and when to apply for deafblind. Very specific criteria for deafblind.

What have consumers received on the wireless program? Primarily smart phones, followed by tablets, and then a lot of accessory pieces, including amplifiers, speech apps that go with the tablets. We have several folks who have access issues that prevent them from using their hands, but they are able to use an adaptive stylus. So that makes things more conducive for them being able to continue distance communications. We have replaced a couple of devices because things have occurred that were unusual.

Any questions about wireless?

JOHN VAN ESCHEN: Do you decide what people get? When people contact you, do they have a general idea of what they want and are very specific?

STACY BRADY: It varies. A lot of our individuals, especially if they have hearing loss, we encourage them to go to our demonstration centers throughout the state because typically we are looking at: Is their phone compatible to the

accessories? Someone using a neck loop, is it Bluetooth? Is it something that needs to be plugged into the device? Does the phone have a port if it is going to be plugged in? Do they have hearing aids that are compatible to accepting the emissions from the neck loop? If they don't have a hearing aid with a T-coil, it won't do good to request equipment that won't work with what they have. A lot of people go to demonstration sites.

The vision-impaired folks know what they want. They say I need a tablet, I need a smartphone, and it is certified by a lot of their counselors.

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: I do have several clients who are reliant on the CapTel program, and they tend to get an iPhone, not an iPad. Some of my clients have approached me saying that they already have an iPhone but they want an iPad, and typically they don't get it. Is that right? Am I correct in saying that?

STACY BRADY: It depends on a variety of reasons.

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: Yeah. Well, I say that because I have one client who says I prefer an iPad even though they have an iPhone because the screen is bigger for VRS purposes.

STACY BRADY: One of the big miscommunications individuals have is that tablets are Wi-Fi only. They are not Wi-Fi plus cellular. The Wi-Fi plus cellular requires you have a data plan. Well, that's where if you are out and about -- and we

are really looking at how we are approaching some things in the pilot because again we are still under pilot. It has not been made a permanent program. So we are restricted by a lot of things. But one of the concerns is your car breaks down, how do you call for a tow truck if you are deaf? You are going to have to pull out your smartphone and use the Relay to attach using the data. You can't use that with an iPad if it doesn't have cellular that you are paying for service. A lot of people can't afford both a cell phone and a data plan on a tablet.

Does that answer those questions?

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: I do have another question. I have a few clients who approached me saying, I can't afford a data plan. Can I get an iPad instead?

STACY BRADY: Once an individual applies, they are under the same warranty time frame as anything else. It will be three years. They can still run an iPhone --

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: I don't think you understood my question.

STACY BRADY: I understood. Let me explain. Even though you can't afford the cell plan, you can still connect to Wi-Fi. So essentially it becomes an iPod.

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: Okay.

STACY BRADY: It is not really the intent of the program, but it is what it is.

Any other questions?

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STACY BRADY: The iCanConnect, this is the Missouri deafblind program. During the same fiscal year -- this also happens to be the same time frame that the FCC uses is July 1st through March of this year -- we have served 49 individuals providing 140 devices. Brenda has worked diligently on this. The end of their fiscal year for the iCanConnect program is June 30. She should be using up all of those phones very soon. That's something to be aware of. I think she gets around 180. They keep reducing our allotment. We have to ask for more. I think she is around \$170,000 to administer that whole program. And as many of you may know, there is a lot of equipment that individuals need in order to continue access or to understand how to use the equipment that they are receiving.

JOHN VAN ESCHEN: So the iCanConnect program, that's funded federally?

STACY BRADY: Correct.

JOHN VAN ESCHEN: Is it some of the same equipment that, you know, the State of Missouri is funding?

STACY BRADY: Yes. Everything -- there is -- the unique thing about the deafblind program is that anything that is available on TAP Wireless is available on deafblind, but there is a lot more available on deafblind, like they can buy computers. They can buy large screen monitors. So there is a lot of pieces that we can't purchase on TAP Telephone or TAP

Wireless that is able to be provided through the deafblind program. Additionally, the warranties are substantially different.

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JOHN VAN ESCHEN: I am trying to distinguish a little bit more the State's program and the federal.

STACY BRADY: So the reason we include this is, one, they are using Relay. A lot of these folks are using the Relay services. That's important as part of the Relay Advisory Council, that individuals getting the equipment, some of them may need the zoom text in order to see, but some may be using the minutes through the CapTel 880I Braille device or they are using the web CapTel that they can now see, even though the phone version doesn't work for them except to voice out. They can increase that font substantially on CapTel that you can't get with the mobile devices or the traditional telephone.

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: So Stacy and Brenda Whitlock and John Effinger, they did an absolutely fabulous presentation at Power-Up. They presented on the differences between the iConnect (sic) program and the TAP Wireless and several other programs that were under their agency. And they did some kind of like Excel spreadsheet showing -- explaining the differences between the two, the two programs. So she is just talking about the devices through iConnect -- oh, iCanConnect for the deafblind only because of Relay services that have been installed on those devices.

STACY BRADY: This is not exactly the one. This is the one I am giving next week in St. Louis. I will make this a little larger. It goes through -- this is not all of the programs we offer. But it breaks it down into what the basic eligibility or criteria is for the program. And we compared ETC, TAP For Telephone, and TAP Wireless programs, and what are the age requirements and residency -- that is easy, Missouri -- income, disability served. Can equipment be tried before it is purchased? Where and how can they try devices? Where is training provided? Where to get the program e-mails? There was waivers on here, but I didn't put it in here because it falls under something different under DD. When we compared all of this, we did a game at the end and folks did a great job trying to figure out what program to apply to so they have a better understanding.

For deafblind they have to meet the Helen Keller definition. Does anyone know what the Helen Keller definition is? Vision has to be 20 over 200 with best correction, substantial hearing loss that -- and between the two have to create a functional limitation and substantial impediment to daily activities or be progressive in nature.

WHITNEY PAYNE: One more question while we are discussing this. You have referred to the iCanConnect program as a deafblind program or the deafblind program?

STACY BRADY: It is for equipment for distance communication.

It is the program.

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WHITNEY PAYNE: Okay. I wanted to make sure those were interchangeable. Thanks.

STACY BRADY: We were selected by the FCC to be the administrators of that, and Brenda is the contact for that.

WHITNEY PAYNE: Also, would it be possible to get a copy of that spreadsheet that you just showed us after?

STACY BRADY: Absolutely. I would be more than happy. We can go somewhere and print it off.

WHITNEY PAYNE: As counsel I don't have a lot of understanding, and I have been trying to get a better grasp of all of the things that are offered through this. Thanks.

STACY BRADY: Okay. Last is my contact information. I tried to make it fast today. If there is no other questions...

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: I did have a question. I want to go ahead and introduce -- Diana, do you want to go ahead and introduce yourself?

CLEMENTINE BROWN: Clementine.

ADONIS BROWN: I am Adonis Brown, the Executive Director for the Missouri Statewide Independent Living Council.

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: Are there any questions in regards to Stacy's presentation and the programs?

STEPHANIE LOGAN: This isn't your presentation; right? Just in the future, is there anyway we can get a copy of your presentation? Because that's so far away and too small to see

sometimes.

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STACY BRADY: We tried to make it bigger. This room is not -- if you notice the table is over here and the screen is over there.

STEPHANIE LOGAN: So is it possible then to get a copy next time?

STACY BRADY: We will try.

OPEOLUWA SOTONWA: Yeah, I just wanted to see the comparisons, and I could not see it because it was over there and so small.

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: Okay. So how long is your presentation?

MICHELLE VICINO: I don't think it is long, but it depends on how in-depth you want to get about the services.

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: Should we go ahead and get her to present or go get our lunch?

STEPHANIE LOGAN: Let's have her present.

STACY BRADY: Would it be okay to turn off the lights up front?

SPEAKER: Sure.

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: Yes.

MICHELLE VICINO: I have to hit this. And should I sign or talk? And trying to hit this. I will talk.

So hi, everybody. Yeah, this part of the presentation should not be very long. I will just get right into it.

So I will start out with a snapshot of the Relay Missouri from October 2017 to March 2018. You can also follow along in the PowerPoint if you can't see the screen.

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You will notice the total TRS relayed minutes in the time frame was almost 104,000, and the CapTel was a little over 104,000. If you remember our numbers from last year were a bit higher. The reason is because in the new contract that started in September, we went from session to conversation minutes. And if you don't know what it means: A session minute using Relay, the clock starts when a person using Relay reaches the agent from the time the agent picks up to the time the agent disconnects the call. That is called what is being relayed. That's billed to the state. Now with conversation, when do you go to a conversation? That is from the time the Relay user connects to the end user to the time the end user hangs up the phone. Doesn't include the call setup or -- the call setup which is when the agent is getting ready to set up the call. Even though the minutes, the billable minutes to the state is less, but it doesn't mean there is less users. It just means the way the state is being billed has changed.

Any questions on that? John.

JOHN VAN ESCHEN: Do most states go with conversation minutes or do they use session minutes?

MICHELLE VICINO: I do not know actually.

And then we have had 117 outreach events. And we have

reached over 9,000 people within that time frame. Al is doing a very good job and getting out there. That's a snapshot from that time frame. 13

So the TRS call volume, this is a breakdown of each year from 2008 to today's date. Again, it is the same thing I say every time that we meet. The TRS trend is down because people are transitioning over to maybe video relay service or IP services not billed to the state. Technologies are evolving and our customers are going with advanced technologies. That's why the numbers are decreasing. Very common throughout the entire United States. This is not an exception to Missouri at all.

And then here is the CapTel call volume. You will see since 2009 that the numbers have decreased. Same explanation as TRS, people are migrating over to Internet-based CapTel services. However, you will see in the past four months we have pretty much kept the same. We were in line with where we were last year. But minutes are trending down because people are moving over to Internet-based CapTel services.

Any questions on the graphs before I move on?

And here I wanted to show you a breakdown of percentage of call types. So as you know Relay is TRS, hearing carryover, voice carryover. You have different ways of using TRS. I wanted to give you just a screen shot of percentage of those relay calls, how they are being used. The majority of it, 57%

is TTY. The zero percents are the deafblind usage. Coming in second is voice. So that would be a voice caller calling someone who is using Relay. So that's basically a snapshot of percentage of how they are using the service. 14

STACY BRADY: With the realtime text to TTY, would that be billable based on the direction of the call? So if an RTT to TTY user, it wouldn't make a difference I guess because it is direct connect, so to speak.

MICHELLE VICINO: If you get into RTT, my understanding with RTT, it won't be billed to the State from my understanding. It is a slightly advanced technology to TTY. If an RTT user calls a TTY user -- wait, hold on.

STACY BRADY: It is not going through Relay.

MICHELLE VICINO: This was just discussed last week. I am trying to remember what was said. I can follow up for you because I don't want to give the wrong idea. Can you rephrase the question again so I can get it answered?

STACY BRADY: Actually, what I think is -- because once I run it through my head, because it is realtime text to a TTY caller or TTY caller to realtime text, it is like a direct call. It is not going through Relay.

MICHELLE VICINO: My understanding it will not go through the Relay service. It will go straight to each other, yes.

I wanted to add this slide. Normally, I just give you the outreach spreadsheet, but I wanted to do a breakdown for you.

So this is the breakdown of types of outreach we are doing, conferences, hearing aid distributors, agencies, and then the number of how many were done in the time frame. Miscellaneous I added because sometimes Al will just -- this particular situation he bumped into someone at the grocery store, and a conversation ensued about the Relay services. And he ended up talking with a customer about Relay services. I added that.

For the 114, the other slide said 117 and the reason for the discrepancies is because conferences are more than one day. So I only counted one each on this one, but the other one if it was a two-day conference, I listed it twice. That's the breakdown. You will see he is going to a lot of assisted living and senior centers. But this is basically a breakdown of what he has done since October of 2017. If you want more detail, it is in the outreach spreadsheet that I handed out to everybody. It shows you exactly where he went.

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: Question: So if we backtrack to your point, Stacy, about RTT. Can RTT users call the Relay services?

MICHELLE VICINO: I believe the point of RTT -- I don't know. I am going to follow-up on that for you. There was a discussion about it last week. I believe so because if you have an RTT user who wants to call the library, they would have to go through the relay service. The purpose of RTT is to be able to text in realtime so you see the message as it is

happening. You see the message. Are you familiar with AOL Instant Messenger, 10, 15 years ago? You could see what was being typed as it was typed. There is no "go ahead" or you waiting for the person to finish. An RTT user would have to go through Relay to reach the hearing caller.

STACY BRADY: What I think is important is, one, RTT is only available on certain devices. Some are native; some are apps, depending on your carrier. But last, it uses your voice minutes and not your data. That is what was supposed to make it unique to individuals to be able to have that call that they necessarily need to do even if it is to 911.

MICHELLE VICINO: Any questions on outreach report? You can go over the outreach report while we have lunch. If you have questions, let me know.

And then these three new services offered in the new contract, and I listed them again. Relay Conference Captioning is being offered now thanks to the vote of the Advisory Board, and video assisted speech-to-speech and voice carryover speech-to-speech are the three new services in this contract. Now we went over them in the last meeting. I don't know if you wanted to go over them again. But I added it to this presentation. I will be more than happy if you want to go over them or not.

STEPHANIE LOGAN: No, I don't think so.

MICHELLE VICINO: Should I go through them again?

STEPHANIE LOGAN: I remember. I am good.

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APRIL MASON DONOVAN: I would like to go through it, just kind of the basics again, refresher.

MICHELLE VICINO: The Relay Conference Captioning. This one provides a live realtime text on to your computer on your Internet connected computer. So it allows you to call into conference calls and you read the captions of what is said on your computer on any multiparty conference call. That's RCC. This is what it looks like. I handed the demo around last year. Each line you see that as a different speaker talking. That's where the line is and then -- that's blurry.

So this allows someone with a hearing loss to participate in a conference call and they can read what is being said and then they also have the option of on the bottom if you want to type your question, you send it to the captionist and they voice what you ask at the earliest convenience, or you can call into the conference call and you can read and talk into the phone into the conference call. That's RCC. This is free to those who live in the State of Missouri.

JOHN VAN ESCHEN: When you say "free", free to users but the relay fund --

MICHELLE VICINO: So if I meet someone at a conference who wants to use it, they are not going to get charged for it, for the customer, sorry.

JOHN VAN ESCHEN: When people want to use that service, they

have to call in advance or set it up 24 hours in advance?

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MICHELLE VICINO: Okay. So there is going to be a website specifically for this. It has not been set up yet. They have to go to the website and they register their call, the date, time, how long, the conference number, any important information that -- to get the captionist ready for the call. And we -- I believe it is a 48-hour advance but it does not mean that you cannot get a captioner if you register 20 hours in advance. I have seen it happen.

So you register the call and then they will send you an e-mail with a code. That code gets you to this screen when it is time to make the call. And if anybody else on that call -- if we were on a call, I would give it to anyone, whoever needed to access that, would access the number. You don't all register individually. A few minutes before the call starts, you go to the same website, and on top it has a website where you enter the code and then you say who you are and click enter, and then you come to this screen. And the captions -- as the call happens, the captions will be live for you.

ADONIS BROWN: Will this system work with Amazon Chime?

MICHELLE VICINO: Amazon Chime? Chrome?

ADONIS BROWN: Chime is a conferencing line, and it goes through the Internet as well as your phone.

MICHELLE VICINO: As long as it is a conference number, it is fine, yeah, a number that someone can call into, then, yeah, it

will work.

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ADONIS BROWN: Okay.

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: So why is it not set up on the website yet?

MICHELLE VICINO: Because you have from when the contract is signed and agreed, you have an implementation period. So it is supposed to be live, the estimated date is May 9th. I can't set it up until implementation, after implementation.

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: Okay.

MICHELLE VICINO: All right. The next service was a video assisted speech-to-speech. This allows a person with a speech disability to use both a telephone line and a video device to make their calls. So in addition to speaking, they can also use -- they use visual cues. So the agent can pick up the cues to help facilitate the call.

So the video is actually one way. So on the video the relay can see the speech-to-speech user but the user doesn't need to see the relay operator. It is a one-way video. If they are trying to say the number three, and they have a hard time saying "three," they hold their fingers up, three, the agent can see the cues to help facilitate the conversation. That's how it works.

STACY BRADY: How does the individuals know that relay may not be understanding and the individual needs that cue?

MICHELLE VICINO: Also, if the agent could not understand the

relay user, they will be able to hear on the phone.

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STACY BRADY: Okay.

MICHELLE VICINO: It is not a speech-to-speech deaf user; they just have the speech disability.

STACY BRADY: So the relay -- typically it is like the relay isn't necessarily heard by all of the parties. This is going to be open up from both sides as a pass through and relay is a pass through but both sides are able to hear what the relay is saying?

MICHELLE VICINO: Okay, I see what you mean. In this case I would say yes, but let me follow-up. From my understanding on the screen there is no way to type to each other. So I will confirm that with you.

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: This is April. What video equipment do you use or software?

MICHELLE VICINO: OmniJoin.

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: Who provides OmniJoin?

MICHELLE VICINO: Well, Relay Missouri doesn't provide it. Is that something you provide, MoTAP?

STACY BRADY: That's the service itself?

MICHELLE VICINO: It is software. The software can be downloaded on to a laptop.

STACY BRADY: That's not my program. I don't know. I don't have an answer for that.

MICHELLE VICINO: Well, then in this case the customer would

have it on their laptop.

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APRIL MASON DONOVAN: What's the cost of the download, the fee?

MICHELLE VICINO: I don't think so. I will check. It is one word, O-M-N-I-join. Yes, Brother. Brother.

STEPHANIE LOGAN: Cloud.

MICHELLE VICINO: I don't know. But the host is Brother.

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: Only can find OMNIJAM.

STEPHANIE LOGAN: You can get it for free.

MICHELLE VICINO: There was talk at one point about transitioning the service over to Skype, but I don't know where it is in that process. Skype is free.

There was talk back then that they were going to transition to Skype, but I don't know where it is, where that discussion went.

STEPHANIE LOGAN: There is different plans out there.

MICHELLE VICINO: Okay. And then the third service was voice carryover speech-to-speech. Last time I was here it was called speech-to-speech carryover. Well, I convinced them to switch it around because this is processed as a VCO call not a speech call. This allows someone who has a hearing loss but doesn't have very clear speech to have a voice carryover call but using a speech-to-speech agent. And the reason why it is important is because a speech-to-speech agent is trained to relay -- to relay calls to someone with a speech impediment. So that eases

the frustration of the voice carryover user. To remind you a voice carryover user is someone who is hard of hearing or deaf but can use their voice. That's what that is.

STACY BRADY: So are all of these -- except for maybe the conferencing -- these other two going to go through 711 relay or are there specialized numbers that they would use to access that?

MICHELLE VICINO: It is through 711. However, the voice carryover speech-to-speech does have a dedicated 1-800 number but it will route through 711. All of this information will be added to the Relay Missouri website. I just -- once I get approval from the State with the funds, then I will start working on the website. Yes, it goes to 711.

That's it.

STACY BRADY: They should build a profile prior to accessing -- correct? -- so that relay knows --

MICHELLE VICINO: We always encourage relay users to build a profile. It helps the agent figure out. Otherwise, when they are on the phone, they have to figure out is it a TTY user or voice carryover user. That information is on the Relay Missouri website customer profile.

JOHN VAN ESCHEN: What is the plan for letting people know about these new services?

MICHELLE VICINO: Well, it will be on the website. It will be posted to Facebook, and my contractor will be out spreading

the word as well. And I am hoping that maybe you guys will tell your customers it is available to them. If approved, I can do paid advertising on social media. I can do stuff like that, but that's my plan for now.

STACY BRADY: Are they going to be developing new booklets that I can pass out?

MICHELLE VICINO: It will be updated with the new information, yes.

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: And once it is ready, you are going to let us all know about it?

MICHELLE VICINO: Yes. You mean when the services are live? Is that what you mean?

MICHELLE VICINO: Right now the estimated date is May 9, but if it changes, I will let you know. We are aiming for May 9 for all three services.

JOHN VAN ESCHEN: On the new conference captioning service, RCC, are you going to be -- I guess, future reports tracking the usage for that?

MICHELLE VICINO: Yes, RCC will be on the invoice and on the traffic report. It will be on there. I can on the first one we get, I can point out exactly where it is so you know that.

Any other questions?

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: Any questions for her part? Are you guys ready for lunch then? We can take a break. How long do you guys want?

JOHN VAN ESCHEN: Staff's part isn't very long. We could do that and then see how it goes.

STEPHANIE LOGAN: Are we doing a working lunch today? Could we do that during the presentations?

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: That's a good idea to have a working lunch.

WHITNEY PAYNE: In the past we have taken about 30 minutes for everyone to get their lunch and have some time and then come back and start doing the presentation.

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: Okay.

MICHELLE VICINO: Good.

JOHN VAN ESCHEN: So you want to wait or do --

SPEAKER: Are we going ahead with the meeting?

WHITNEY PAYNE: I mean --

JOHN VAN ESCHEN: I think, Kari, your part is a few minutes. Why don't we just do that?

KARI SALSMAN: We are passing around a handout. Does everyone have one?

KARI SALSMAN: First sheet goes over the Relay Missouri fund in the balance in the account. It is currently at 3.76 million. You can see it is gradually declining which is what we wanted to happen when we reduced the surcharge. Then the second sheet lists our current committee members. And if you will see under the appointed members, I have Diane highlighted. She resigned effective this month. So we need to

discuss if anyone has any recommendations to fill this spot.

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APRIL MASON DONOVAN: This is for a person -- for a speech disability. So if you know of anyone who fits those qualifications that would be a good member for this position, go ahead and nominate their name. Anyone? Stacy, can you think of anyone?

STACY BRADY: I am contacting someone at SIL to see if they have an idea.

STEPHANIE LOGAN: I have a board meeting tomorrow at SIL and I can ask to see if they have anybody they would recommend.

MICHELLE VICINO: Can you contact Diane to ask if she knows someone?

WHITNEY PAYNE: And if you do have any recommendations, if you can just let Kari know with that person's contact information because we would need to confirm that they do want to have a place on the board -- the committee.

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: Any other questions related to her report?

JOHN VAN ESCHEN: In terms of the fund balance, I am assuming we are going to have to look at the assessment level at some point during the next 12 months.

KARI SALSMAN: It was changed in April 2017, and we have to review it every two years.

JOHN VAN ESCHEN: And a general rule of thumb that the Missouri Commission has used to try and keep a reasonable fund

balance is roughly have a fund balance that is five to nine months worth of expenses. And I am not sure where that is at right now, but it is something less than the current fund balance. It might be more like one and a half million.

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: Any other questions?

JOHN VAN ESCHEN: But when we do look at it, we will share it with the committee members and if you have any thoughts about what the Missouri PSC staff might recommend the committee can talk about it and weigh in. I know they have done that in the past and it has made a difference, the Commission does listen to what the committee has to say.

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: Okay. Great. Good to know. So should we go ahead and have lunch now? Everybody want to form a line and get their lunch and then we will have open discussion.

STACY BRADY: Back at 12:30.

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: We will come back at 12:30.

(Lunch taken.)

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: Do you want to go ahead and start? Thank you for the wonderful lunch. I will try not to overdue it with the chips and try to control myself.

[LAUGHTER]

Now I am sure we are on opening discussion; right? So -- open discussion, I am sorry. Is there anything we want to discuss? Any more items that were not on the agenda already? Any open discussion? Opeoluwa no.

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: Any issues from the deaf and hard of hearing? Anything from your services in relation to that?

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STEPHANIE LOGAN: No. We have set up a crisis line, I think -- I don't know if I mentioned it at the last meeting. We have a video phone crisis line that is 24-hour domestic violence, those who are victims of that. It is awesome. Any help with advertising within the Deaf community, it is greatly appreciated. It is on Facebook, yes. It is called Deaf Crisis Line.

OPEOLUWA SOTONWA: My office has been working on a few bills. Some that passed through the House and the Senate as well. One has been switched out, that's the driver's license bill -- or it is about being switched out, the -- switching it to DHH. It is passing through the House and the Senate. We have one on the floor for hearing aids to be distributed through the Commission. That has gone through the House and the Senate, but in the Senate we are having a bit of an issue with some opposition groups. The reasoning for that, they think we are trying to take money from the MO Relay fund which is not true. But, however, we clarified that and in an amendment to the bill we are not taking funds from this MO Relay. The bill itself will authorize the treasury to distribute funds and so that fund will not run out or be taken away on a year-by-year basis. That means the money can be granted at the federal level to that program. So we filed the amendment yesterday. And we are

hopeful that it goes through. If it passes, that means that we will start providing hearing aids for those who can't afford it here in Missouri. 28

STEPHANIE LOGAN: Awesome! Opeoluwa there is another bill that is to reduce the number of board members from the BCI or the Board for Certification of Interpreters. We have two boards under our purview. The BCI focuses on certification of interpreters, and it will reduce the number of sitting members from 5 to 3.

And we opposed a new bill that came up that would shift the State Committee of Interpreters to our Board of Commission -- Board for Certification of Interpreters. That bill died last week. We were in opposition to that. So that's a huge relief.

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: Why were you in opposition to that?

OPEOLUWA SOTONWA: SCI has many regulations, many laws that are under the Department of Professional Registration and so it is not easily uprooted from their system. And that would be more burdensome on us, as well as the fact that we don't have the authority to "police", for lack of a better term, interpreters. We provide certification for those who want to be interpreters and that's it. We are an advocacy agency. We can't be an oversight and policing for those interpreters. That's more than we are equipped to handle. The SCI will do investigations on those who will break an interpreters code of ethics. That stays with the SCI, Professional Registration.

We have no hand in that. That is a lot of responsibilities we cannot take on. That's why we were opposed to that bill in the first place. 29

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: So the hearing aid bill has passed through the Senate; right? It is more like a pilot program?

OPEOLUWA SOTONWA: No. It may not get off the ground quickly. And the reason for that is because we need to have time to set up the rules, get the right people assigned to the task force. And, secondly, based on my conversations with the Governor's Office we need to start with -- we are hoping to start with \$5 million amount that will rotate through that funding. And we are also hoping to diversify our funding sources. We will be able to have grants as well so we are not just reliant on one source of funding. But it seems like we are kind of running in circles with this discussion. Hopefully, it passes and it is signed and we can get it done and signed and be done with it.

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: You have one job opening.

OPEOLUWA SOTONWA: Yes, we actually just hired, filled the position. The person has not officially started. Their date is May 16th when they will be starting, the official start date for that position to be filled. We have not made an official announcement yet. And this person will be moving in from Utah as well. Wonderful person. But we are excited to have her on staff.

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: Do we have any --

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JOHN VAN ESCHEN: The funding for the relay -- or the hearing aid bill, where would that come from?

OPEOLUWA SOTONWA: In the new bill or the amendment that will clarify it. It comes from the State Treasurer will establish a fund known as "the hearing aid distribution fund," and the point will be specified and funds will only be set for hearing aids. It will have a specific purpose. We won't take MO Relay funds for it. That will be clarified in the bill.

There is also -- we will also make rules as to who can qualify that. They have to meet the federal poverty level. We can't come up with an arbitrary law because you know how things go. They can go up or down. We want to stick with the federal poverty level and make adjustments from there. That gives us flexibility.

JOHN VAN ESCHEN: So it would come out of state revenue?

OPEOLUWA SOTONWA: Technically, that is a conversation we are having with the Governor's Office, but that may also change with what's going on. However, we can also -- we are open to get grants as well. That is one of our approaches in order to get funding. We are talking to our legislators in Washington, D.C. to see if we can find funding for that as well and talking to them. Looking for different sources of income. We get money from the federal. We can put it into the account or whatever else we have.

JOHN VAN ESCHEN: Currently, there is no program to --

OPEOLUWA SOTONWA: There is no --

JOHN VAN ESCHEN: -- provide financial assistance for --

STEPHANIE LOGAN: And we really need it.

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: Except VR. They do help pay for hearing aids for those who do not have jobs. It depends on the rules. We have to work around that. If a person -- Medicaid or Medicare doesn't cover the hearing aid, it depends on their financial level as well, but VR can help with hearing aids if they are looking for a job. I am sorry.

JOHN VAN ESCHEN: Do you think it will pass?

OPEOLUWA SOTONWA: I wish I had a magic wand or a way to predict that. With politics, I am not involved in politics. I am an advocate. I let them know of our issues. I work hard to convince them. But the guarantee of it passing, I can't speculate on that.

STACY BRADY: So are audiologists going to be contracted or BCIHSs, are they going to be traditional hearing aids? Will they be PSAPS?

OPEOLUWA SOTONWA: PSAP?

STACY BRADY: Personal sound amplification systems, not necessarily hearing aids.

OPEOLUWA SOTONWA: Our goal is just for the hearing aid itself. That would require that the person who will get the hearing aid versus has it prescribed from a licensed

audiologist or language instrument specialists. They have to go through somebody in order to get this hearing aid.

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STACY BRADY: So a person would apply to MCDHH. You guys would approve it and then just say, we have -- here is an audiologist we work with? How does it work? What is the foreseeable plan?

OPEOLUWA SOTONWA: The bill's language does provide us with flexibility to partner with organizations, independent living centers across Missouri. We want to refer people to those agencies who are close to them. Fill out the application to us, and if they qualify within our rules, they are below the federal poverty line and what have you, then we are authorized to have them go through a hearing aid screening and that will be most likely through a licensed and certified audiologist or what have you. At that point we can go ahead and approve. But we are still working with an audiologist. Right now we don't have any rules set in place.

[RINGTONE]

We don't have the authority to come up with those, but once -- we will cross that bridge once we come to it.

STACY BRADY: I am confused about something. By the way, I am asking this as a deaf and hard of hearing specialist, not as Missouri Assistive Technology. They need to have a screening in order to get the hearing aids. So you are paying for the screening too as part of what is being --

OPEOLUWA SOTONWA: Really, that depends on the funding that we have. If the funds are there in the program we can cover everything from the screening to getting the hearing aid itself. It will be covered. But as it is right now, I can't go in depth because the rules haven't been set in place. This is just more basic information of how it will look, how we want to design our program. We don't have anything set in stone.

MICHELLE VICINO: I think it also depends on the insurance, on the individual's insurance. For me, for example, my insurance will cover screening but not the hearing aid device. That is also an option.

OPEOLUWA SOTONWA: The issue that we are focusing on is not everyone will qualify. So we will make it a priority to those who can't afford it first, meaning those who don't have insurance, basically.

Secondly, veterans are a focus as well. Many veterans go to war. They keep us safe. They may lose their hearing as a result of that. The VA doesn't always cover hearing aids. Oftentimes, they feel that's a secondary issue. Their primary focus is on P -- what is that acronym? PTSD. It becomes a secondary issue for them, hearing is. We want to provide that as well.

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: What about the warranty of the hearing aid?

OPEOLUWA SOTONWA: (Clarification.) Well, I assume that that

would be subject to the audiologists who provide the right device and maybe there is some way I could borrow your rules from VR and we could kind of model that after that. We will see how that is funded. That's what we are going to approach next year. But as it is right now, the State isn't really interested in expanding Medicaid for those purposes. There are other ways instead of expanding Medicaid.

STACY BRADY: So if they don't qualify for the program for whatever reason, then what do you do? Do you refer them to any other programs to seek funding? Is it just dropped? Again, I am looking for the people that may fall through the cracks still.

OPEOLUWA SOTONWA: If the person does not qualify, we do have other resources available in the office. Some private organizations may be willing to donate hearing aids. But as it is right now, from the start saying everybody will be qualified is a huge undertaking. The State would be bankrupt by that program alone. So we are keeping it very pretty broad saying that those who meet the requirements can get it. And if the program is a success, we can talk to the legislature and have more amendments added to it and specify what our needs are. In the beginning we can't really speak to certain points.

STACY BRADY: Just putting it out there, Missouri Show Me loan is a program where people can borrow money and pay it back over 24 months, although they have expanded it to the length of

the warranty that is provided on the hearing aids.

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OPEOLUWA SOTONWA: I am aware of that. Often when people call our office they say they don't want to be stuck in debt. They already have issues with finances. They don't want to add more to that. So we know that's some of those individuals without hearing aids may not be able to go to work. It is a win/win for the State. Those individuals who need hearing aids to go to work, they can pay taxes. They are off of Social Security for the State. So we are trying to use that as a selling point to those legislators so they can see the point. We are not really trying to become more of a charity. We are just giving out whatever we have on state funding. That's not what we are doing. What we are doing is important. Not everybody will use it. Some people may not want to use hearing aids. They may just want to use what they have. But for those who want it or need it, we want it to be available for them.

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: That's what I was going to suggest because some of my clients who are a little above the poverty line, I refer them to Show Me Loans to pay some of it and then VR can pay the rest to cover that. I am not sure what the ratio is.

STACY BRADY: So are you going to start a recycling program for hearing aids in addition to this?

OPEOLUWA SOTONWA: No. That's more a tech issue we don't want to add to. I am not very knowledgeable about that, so we

are not looking at that right now.

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APRIL MASON DONOVAN: Okay. Any other services? I think you had something you were talking about on the agenda earlier.

ADONIS BROWN: Yes. I just wanted to announce that on May 18 the Missouri Statewide Independent Living Council will be holding its quarterly meeting. And that meeting will take place at Providence Bank on Ellis Boulevard. They have a community conference room on the lower level. The meeting will be from approximately 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 or 1:00 and all are invited. And I brought copies of our agenda with me. Could you pass those around? We will pass them around.

And also, MOSILC now officially has its own office number.

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: Okay. So is there any other updates? Any more we would like to add? Okay.

So before we set up the next meeting dates I want to make sure that you will be sharing with us and letting us know of the three new services that will be ready by May 9th. So, you know, your marketing efforts and all and marketing plans, so that would be very helpful to us, and also to make sure about the RTT.

MICHELLE VICINO: RTT is still a work in progress. I am doing the best I can to respond on that. We have a copy of the notes after this -- I don't have a pen on me. If you send me those three issues, I can get back to you on that.

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: Now the next meeting should be in

October. Correct? I was thinking October 17th.

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STEPHANIE LOGAN: Is that a Tuesday?

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: No, a Wednesday. October 17th.

STACY BRADY: So October is Disability Awareness Month.

There may be a lot going on and parkingwise could be an issue.

ADONIS BROWN: Yeah.

OPEOLUWA SOTONWA: It is also the time of the Interpreters Conference. So it may be complicated.

OPEOLUWA SOTONWA:

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: So September?

MICHELLE VICINO: Hold up a minute. What about October, because there is not really -- we have not really had a conflict in October.

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: Yeah, we always had October and April meetings. Why now are we having a --

STACY BRADY: Parking is often a conflict in the parking garage.

STEPHANIE LOGAN: The whole month?

STACY BRADY: Depends. We never know when they are going to have the walks up to the capitol.

WHITNEY PAYNE: By that same token I would say, there is probably always something happening at the capitol. So it is almost hard to miss an event that would be happening over there.

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: So what's the best solution for this.

STEPHANIE LOGAN: When is the Interpreters Conference?

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OPEOLUWA SOTONWA: October 18 through --

STEPHANIE LOGAN: Maybe the week before, October 10th.

OPEOLUWA SOTONWA: Before that we will be busy planning. But maybe after would work.

STEPHANIE LOGAN: The second or third?

ADONIS BROWN: Or the 25th?

STEPHANIE LOGAN: That's a Thursday. I can't do a Thursday.

KARI SALSMAN: Care Tuesday, the 23rd.

MICHELLE VICINO: I can't do the 23.

ADONIS BROWN: 24th.

OPEOLUWA SOTONWA: The 30th.

KARI SALSMAN: I will be out of town the 24th.

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: Wow!

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: The 16th. The 9th?

STACY BRADY: All Tuesdays?

STEPHANIE LOGAN: Tuesdays, and Wednesdays are fine. But I prefer not close to August -- or October 31st.

MICHELLE VICINO: I think the 16th is perfect for me at least.

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: The 16th.

STEPHANIE LOGAN: Yes.

OPEOLUWA SOTONWA: I cannot. The whole week is the Interpreters Conference and the conference itself.

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: That's the weekend.

OPEOLUWA SOTONWA: Yes, but the whole week is occupied. It is busy. 39

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: I am getting more gray hair!

[LAUGHTER]

STEPHANIE LOGAN: I would prefer not so close to Halloween.

WHITNEY PAYNE: October 2nd? It is the beginning of the month, and it might not be as much happening at the capitol.

ADONIS BROWN: October 2nd.

MICHELLE VICINO: Works for me.

OPEOLUWA SOTONWA: That's fine.

WHITNEY PAYNE: A lawyer is good for something.

STEPHANIE LOGAN: Same place? Same time?

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: Same place, same time, October 2nd, this room, 11:00, October 2nd, at 11:00 a.m., here, in this building, this room.

KARI SALSMAN: If for some reason there is something scheduled in this room, I will let everyone know.

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: Any more questions? Comments? Concerns? Well, thank you all for coming to this meeting and we will adjourn it. Have a safe drive back to wherever you are going. Okay.

STEPHANIE LOGAN: Good job!