

Relay Missouri Advisory Committee

April 20, 2021

CART Reporter: Kimberly A. Pfleinger Schacht,

RPR, CRR, CRC, CCR, CRI

(Meeting held over conference call via Zoom.)

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: Good morning. This is April. How is everybody doing? Is everybody here yet?

Hey, this is April. Is everybody ready to start the meeting. Let me know.

WHITNEY PAYNE: I will take a brief minute before we get started. Kimberly, our CART contractor, has asked if everyone could please stay muted unless they are the one speaking. I can mute everyone until I make someone else the host. So I really need you guys to keep an eye on that yourselves.

Also, if you can state your name when you start speaking, that helps us identify who made what points.

And if you use an acronym, if you could spell it out the first time to explain what it means because we have had some really entertaining interpretations of what the acronyms are (laughing) in the transcript later.

And other than that, I will be quiet. I am happy to make someone else the host as soon as we are ready. And I will answer any questions that come up. But I am just the lawyer, so ... (laughing)

All right. Thanks, everyone.

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: Hello, everybody. Again, this is April. And I am happy to go ahead and take over the host of the meeting and make sure that everything goes well and runs smoothly, hopefully.

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I want each person to go through and introduce yourself so we all know who is on the phone and in person today.

Again, my name is April Mason Donovan.

And I will go over to Cady next. Why don't we go to you.

INTERPRETER: Cady, you are on mute.

CADY MACFEE: Good morning, everyone. This is Cady Macfee from Relay Missouri or Sprint T-Mobile. Happy to see everybody. I hope you are all doing well.

I have two guests -- well, three guests with me today. First is Dawn Shipman. She is my Outreach Specialist for Relay Missouri. Can you wave, Dawn.

DAWN SHIPMAN: Hello. Nice to see everybody.

CADY MACFEE: Next is my manager Karl Ewan.

There is Karl. He is based in Austin, Texas and not dealing with the snow we are dealing with here.

Next is Jeffrey Branch who is taking Chris Smith's place today. Chris Smith has a personal matter he needs to address. So Jeff is taking Chris Smith's place. He is also in sales for T-Mobile Sprint. Thank you.

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: Thanks, Cady. Who wants to go next?

DAVID BAKER: Okay. I will jump in. I am David Baker. I am

the Director of Missouri Assistive Technology. Good morning,
everyone.

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ROB HONAN: I will go ahead. This is Rob Honan, the Director
of MERIL in St. Joe, and I have been on the Council for a
couple of years. So it is good to see everybody.

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: Who is next?

KARI SALSMAN: Hi. I don't have a camera. I am Kari
Salsman, and I am with Commission staff.

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

CLAIRE MENGWASSER: Hi. Oh, go ahead.

STACY BRADY: This is Stacy.

CLAIRE MENGWASSER: Hi. I am Claire Mengwasser. I am a
speech language pathologist, and I work at the Missouri School
for the Deaf.

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: Next? Who else do we have?

STACY BRADY: This is Stacy with Missouri Assistive
Technology.

CADY MACFEE: , Jeff, do you see Stephanie Logan?

INTERPRETER: No, I only see April. I only had pinned on
April. Hold on. I am so sorry. I can see Stephanie.

STEPHANIE LOGAN: Hi, everybody. My name is Stephanie Logan,
Executive Director for DeafLEAD.

INTERPRETER: Okay.

SPEAKER: I know this is kind of new territory for us. It is

the -- what? -- the first virtual meeting we have had.

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I am happy that you are here and thanks for your patience, so what are we going to do next? I think we did introductions first. What's up next?

SPEAKER: The first item on the agenda is the equipment program update.

STACY BRADY: Hi. This is Stacy Brady and I am giving the equipment program update. So I am going to start off with the TAP telephone, what we have done since July 1st of last year, up until March 31st of this year. We have had 345 approved applicants who received 408 devices. Most of those secondary devices are signalers, but there may be other items individuals need. And I compared that to last year just before we went into pandemic mode and we had 537 applicants who were approved, received 677 devices in that same time frame.

So moving over to TAP wireless for fiscal year 21 which is July 1st of 2020 through March 31 of 2021, we had 52 applicants who were approved, received 53 devices. Comparing that to the previous year same time frame, it was 74 approved applicants with 91 devices.

Obviously, we are all aware of the pandemic which has put a huge crimp in receiving applications. But the great news is that we are starting to see an increase in applications and that all but three of our offices have reopened for demonstrations. Of those three offices, one will be opening up

May 4th. So that just leaves us two offices who are really struggling to do anything right now. So that's kind of what is going on with equipment.

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Some additional things that have happened is we have added some new equipment. And part of that is because the manufacturers have discontinued equipment or we have found new needs.

So I am going to start with a cordless phone. We have introduced the Clarity XLC8 cordless phone, and it replaces the Clarity XLC2+.

We also introduced a Clarity XLCgo cell phone amplifier, and it Bluetooths to a variety of devices including some house phones if they are Bluetooth capable. So that's been a really nice addition.

Then we have a teletext inline amplifier. So a lot of folks don't have Bluetooth capability on their phone or they don't have enough amplification on some of the auxiliary Bluetooth capable devices. So the inline amplifier can be put on a cell phone, house phone, a computer or other technologies where sound output is occurring.

We also found a need for individuals with multiple disabilities where hearing is limited and they are needing an amplifier but their phone itself may not have the plug-ins typically available. So something like the TelliTalk where the person has had their larynx removed, they may still have

hearing loss. We added an inline amplifier that can help resolve both of those needs.

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Another device we found an issue we had a number of people recently with cognitive issues, memory issues and they also have hearing loss but there is significant limitations. So the inline amplifier helps to increase that sound boost that's not available -- pardon me -- on any other equipment and allows them to have the amplification and the memory -- that is necessary for them to communicate.

We have introduced a new device called an XLC8-GLT. And it is, A, an amplified phone with automated speech recognition captioning. It is a multipiece unit but it allows individuals an opportunity to get captioning or amplification that may not be resolved in other avenues.

And there are significant differences between automatic -- automated speech recognition versus a human captioning, and that is a major benefit is having a human entity that certain caption phones offer. But we are seeing a huge increase of ASR entering the field and being approved by the FCC.

And then sadly, we have had a couple of devices discontinued or on back order. For some of our quadriplegics we have recently lost the Serene RCx 1000, and that was a hands-free device that scanning was used to help the person reach their end destination party. We have gone to the point where we have sent in all of the devices we had out for demo to be able to be

used as a device for someone who absolutely needs that, and there is not really an extra cost. The difference is that we just pay for the clean up and making sure that it is -- I am sorry about that -- we just make sure it is cleaned up and cleared so that another person can use it. And that's helped us out with several of our consumers who need equipment.

As I mentioned, there is a back order. We are struggling with the Panasonic 450 which has been on back order since pretty much the beginning of the -- well, it has been going on before the beginning of the year. But there is concerns that this one may not be coming back. We are just not sure. There has been a lot of changes at Panasonic which is making it more difficult to figure out what the status is with those devices coming to the US.

And that concludes my report. Are there any questions?

ROB HONAN: Yeah, this is Rob, Rob Honan with MERIL.

I know we talked about acronyms, ASR?

STACY BRADY: Automated speech recognition.

ROB HONAN: Earlier when you first started your presentation you mentioned -- and I don't remember all of the letters -- but the 8 and then it replaces the 2+. Is that correct?

STACY BRADY: Correct. The 2+ is still there but it is going away. The manufacturer has discontinued it.

ROB HONAN: Okay. You know we have some participants that still like that one as well. But the 8 is being chosen. I

just didn't know if the 2+ was completely done or is it going to be in the future, if the 2+ is going to be replaced?

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STACY BRADY: Yes. As of right now they are both still there. But it is the moment Clarity says they are out of stock, they are done.

ROB HONAN: Okay. That's all I needed. Thank you.

CADY MACFEE: Hi, Stacy. Good job on your presentation. Thank you for sharing all of these updates.

I have a question. So I notice that we are not having any Power-Up for the last two years for the obvious reason. Do you think it is on the agenda for next year?

STACY BRADY: This is Stacy. And David is not expecting this, but if he is still on, I think he would be the better person to answer that.

DAVID BAKER: This is David. Well, lucky for you Stacy, I am still on.

Yeah, our plan is to bring it back in 2022 assuming that everything continues to trend in a positive direction. And right now I don't foresee it being any different than it has been in the past in terms of maybe it will most likely be in the spring in Missouri like we traditionally have done. Somewhere in the next few months we will turn our attention to how we are going to bring it back and when.

CADY MACFEE: Will you guys consider a virtual option?

DAVID BAKER: Yeah, we have looked at that and we are

considering it. There is just -- there is something about assistive technology that it is best kind of done face-to-face so people can put their hands-on devices. So that would kind of be our preference. But we might do some kind of hybrid as well so we can have more people be able to access the conference.

CADY MACFEE: Thank you, David.

DAVID BAKER: Uh-huh.

STACY BRADY: This is Stacy. Any other questions before I put myself on mute?

Okay. Cady, I am going to turn it back to you. Thanks.

CADY MACFEE: Hello, everybody. Just -- hold on just a second. Whitney, have you made me host yet?

WHITNEY PAYNE: I have not. But I am going to right now. I was just waiting for you to let me know.

CADY MACFEE: Okay, just go ahead.

WHITNEY PAYNE: All right. You have the host.

CADY MACFEE: Okay. And if you guys need a sign language interpreter, it would probably be best if you pin the interpreter because the PowerPoint will take up the screen.

Are you guys seeing the PowerPoint?

All right. It is just different on mine. I have three monitors that I am seeing. Okay.

Good morning, everybody, from snowy Overland Park. I apologize if I sound more nasal than usual only because I have

been dealing with bouts of allergies, and I can't figure out how to get it to go away.

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So what's new with Relay Missouri? Well, not a whole lot since we last met for obvious reasons. The cases are high so we have not been able to go out and about right now. And I am coming up to two years being Account Manager for Relay Missouri, and my Outreach Specialist, Dawn Shipman celebrated her one-year anniversary with us. Very glad to have her on board.

So this is the total TRS call volume. If you were to look down on the bottom, you will see that the key for -- we are still in the fiscal year 2020 and it is the dark navy blue. We are still about 15 -- between 10,000 to 20,000 calls, TRS calls a month and that is amazing. So I am looking at the report for March and in March we had 15,526 TRS calls. So that varies from TTY, speech-to-speech, HCO, Spanish, all of that. So it is pretty cool to see an increase in TRS calls.

In fiscal year 2020 we are seeing a below 5,000 calls a month for the CapTel calls. And in March we saw about 2,840 calls.

The Relay Conference Captioning. In -- since we last met in October, we are seeing an increase. It was kind of like a mountain for a while. You will see a peak and they would kind of drop down and then we see a peak. Now I am seeing it is steadily growing which is very exciting. So in October we had

10 Relay Conference Captioning events. In November we saw a drop to three. In December it went up to 24; and then in January, 22; February, 19. March, we saw 33 events; so that is the most we have ever seen since we have started using RCC in Missouri. We have kept our extended hours. So if you need to use it, just remember to look at the hours and when RCC is available because I know some of you on this call might request it. I did get a call last month from a big organization in Missouri about using RCC prior to it being amended to the contract. They had an account with Sprint to have that service, and they were asking about it because they have three or four Deaf employees and they remembered us. So that was really exciting because it has been maybe six or seven years since they have used the service and so I think they are maybe the reason why we are seeing a growth.

For outreach activities, we were doing so many goody bags back in fall until there was an increase in COVID so we had to slow down. Businesses were turning us down because they were not allowing outside stuff coming inside their facility, and so we had to respect that. I think we will see them opening again. Dawn has been reaching out to people and hopefully we will get some goody bags out and share the good word about Relay Missouri.

In December we sponsored Signing Santa that Deaf, Inc. hosted. We were going to go to St. Louis, and then they had to

change the event because of COVID. So they were going house to house delivering little presents for the kids with Santa Claus. They asked if we were still willing to putting in their bags for the kids; so we sent our goodies along with brochures. So here is a picture of that on that PowerPoint.

So we are just waiting for the green light right now to do in-person events. So we just have to wait patiently. I mean all of our health and safety is really important to us.

We have a bunch of masks still available. So if you are going back to the office in person soon, let us know. We would be happy to donate a basket of masks for your office just in case your masks break or you need a backup or if somebody comes in, depending on the rules of your city whether it is mandated or not.

We also have some really cute Relay Missouri pens. It is -- you can do like a screen cleaner with his hair, and the pens are awesome, and it is a stylus as well. So we have a bunch of those. So if you are interested in getting any of our giveaways, just let me know and Dawn will send it your way.

I have already mentioned this, that we are not attending any events being held in-person until it is safe to get out and about and be around other people. Last year we paid to be part of the Missouri State Fair that is, you know, in August. But because it was cancelled last year, they are moving -- allowing us to attend this year, and hopefully it is still on.

If you are hosting any virtual events or meetings and you want Relay Missouri to be a part of it, just let us know. We would be happy to. And if you are hosting any event, you need sponsors for, you know, let me know. We need two months in advance.

If you have not been following us on our social media channel, please do. Our Facebook page is Relay Missouri and we are also on Instagram. It is just relaymissouri.

And if you have any questions for me, any questions for me or Dawn or anyone else on the Sprint team.

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: I am wondering about your marketing fund, if they have increased it because the lack of sponsorship during COVID. Will that carryover to the next year?

CADY MACFEE: No. We start the fiscal year with the same fund we are given to start.

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: Does anybody else have any questions for Cady?

CADY MACFEE: Okay? Going once?

Going twice?

All right. Thank you, April.

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: Awesome. Thank you. This is April and the next --

The next Relay Missouri fund balance, the PSC, the staff report. Go ahead.

KARI SALSMAN: I will be going over the staff report portion.

The first item is an update on the Relay Missouri fund balance as reflected in the chart that I circulated by e-mail. The balance was \$1.6 million as of March 31st. The reduction in the surcharge from 6 cents to 4 cents that we did several years ago is serving its purpose and the fund is gradually declining. We are still not within the 5 to 9 months of expenses target range, but we are heading in the right direction with that decrease in the surcharge. 14

The next item is committee vacancies. We are still short two members with one being to represent the Deaf and one to represent the speech impaired. Once again, if anyone has someone in mind, please have them e-mail myself and April their resume and we can go from there.

In October, April, you had mentioned possibly knowing someone in St. Louis to fill the Deaf vacancy. I believe her name was Colleen. Were you able to reach out to her and see if there was any interest, April?

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: I reached out to her again, and she is still not interested. But I can contact her again to see if she has changed her mind.

KARI SALSMAN: No, that's fine. I was just wondering if you were able to reach her. So if anyone does have anybody in mind that thinks they might be interested in serving on the committee, please reach out to them and send them our way. That would be great.

Also, I am not sure who all is aware that Ope has stepped down from his role as the Missouri Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Executive Director effective March 1st. And the Commission announced that Cathee Wolford -- hopefully I am pronouncing it correctly -- will be fulfilling that role as of May 4th. So we will have a new permanent member representing the Commission for the Deaf and Hard Of Hearing starting May 4th.

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: This is very exciting for us. Finally a female Commission Director for MCDHH. Very good news. It is a high honor.

KARI SALSMAN: I did see on their website she is the first female to fill that role.

The next item is the committee by-laws. The Commission gave final approval of the amended by-laws last month. As you recall, I circulated those and everybody voted on those. Basically the update gives greater flexibility and reflects the current practice with the most significant update being giving us the flexibility to hold the meetings remotely as needed.

The next item is the telecommunications relay and CapTel services contract. The contract is being rebid but it has been held up by the State of Missouri Purchasing Department. We are hopeful this matter will soon be completed and a contract awarded and, of course, we will let you know as soon as that occurs.

Are there any questions on any of the --

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APRIL MASON DONOVAN: This is April. I am not understanding -- I am sorry. What is the delay for? Why is it held up?

JOHN VAN ESCHEN: This is John. We can't really get into that. But from my perspective it is just going through the process and it has admittedly taken a long time to get through the Department of Purchasing, longer than what I think we had expected. But things are running its course and we hope everything is gonna be resolved soon.

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: Okay. This is April. I have a question for Relay Missouri, the fund balance. Should I be concerned or not because the money is decreasing?

KARI SALSMAN: No, you should not be concerned. When we reduced the surcharge we wanted to decrease that rate some because it was so well above the target range that we are wanting the fund balance to be in. So you should not be concerned.

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: Okay.

Does anybody have any questions for any of the topics we have discussed?

Wow! It is quiet on a snowy day. The snow is pretty. It is snowing pretty hard right now.

STACY BRADY: This is Stacy. I have something under new business.

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: Okay. Go ahead.

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STACY BRADY: So recently I found out that the TelliTalk electrolarynx phone, our manufacturer for that has changed companies to a new distributor. And the price is not only going to go up but they are really pushing to make the TelliTalk capable of doing face-to-face communications. And all it is, you have to unplug the cap and you have to put the battery pack in. And all it is now is an electrolarynx and works independently on the phone.

So my question is: We don't -- under the state regulation, we are not allowed to provide augmented communication devices.

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: What kind of device, Stacy?

STACY BRADY: Augmentative. Augmentative.

I feel like I am stuck in the middle. Do I pull the device? Do I continue with the device? Do we need to come more in line legislatively through rules and regs to include augmentative communication? But if we do that, then we open up a whole other issue with all types of issues that people use for face-to-face and distance communications. It is a lot on a plate.

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: Does anyone have a response back to Stacy? Any answers? Any thoughts?

STACY BRADY: My thought is either I turn a blind eye or we need something. And it just compounds with a whole list of changes we are going to need to do eventually.

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: Have you talked to other states about what they are doing with that? 18

STACY BRADY: There are a number of states, and I do not have an exact number, but being a member of the Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program Association, known as TEDPA, many of those states do offer augmented communication devices but it varies. Some of those states are voucher states and have more funds. Whereas, other states -- Missouri and Florida are two states that are not allowing augmentative communication devices as part of their program.

ROB HONAN: Just curious, is there an answer why that's the case? I am just wondering why the State of Missouri is in a -- is it a financial issue or something else? Regulatory? I am not really understanding why Missouri is not approving this.

DAVID BAKER: If I am out of line because I am not a voting member, let me know here. That's a really complex issue, Rob. To answer your question, there is a variety of reasons.

Predominantly the one that comes to mind for me is that that's a fairly complex area of assistive technology to effectively match somebody up with. And it would also be an expensive area of assistive technology to match somebody up with because we are talking literally hundreds of other devices that are out there and going down other roads related to apps, augmented communication apps that can be put on iPads. There is a reason that augmented communication is in its own world in

the world of assistive technology.

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Going back to the original issue at hand which is the electrolarynx, Stacy, state that -- if you can state your -- the situation again. I am just wondering if there is a way we can have an exception for that device or you can talk about, discuss just having that device because it could fall under the umbrella of augmented communication, but it is separate from the world because of the nature of the problem it is trying to address.

STACY BRADY: I don't have my regs in front of me. But if I recall, it specifically outlines that electrolarynx devices, augmentative communication devices cannot be used for face-to-face communications.

The concern is the moment you take the cap off and it goes from the electrolarynx to the telephone, once that is removed, you can put a battery backpack into it and it becomes a face-to-face communication device. The concern is this is just a quick fast way for speech language pathologists to use the free program as a way to get an electrolarynx.

DAVID BAKER: Wouldn't they have to have -- to make the argument it is tied to telecommunications access?

STACY BRADY: They would. But that's not gonna be what happens because we see it all the time. Not necessarily an electrolarynx.

ROB HONAN: I appreciate the -- what David, and Stacy as

well, have said.

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The other question -- and again, I am sure there are various reasons for it. But I am curious why these were allowed in some states but not others. And it seems like it is kind of an inconsistent policy administered across the states and there is probably good reasons for it. But I am just wondering: Do you guys have any idea why State B does, but State A doesn't?

DAVID BAKER: Yeah, I don't off the top of my head. It has been a while since I have monitored what other states are doing on that subject.

ROB HONAN: Okay. Thanks.

DAVID BAKER: But now that you bring it up, I got a research project.

ROB HONAN: I would love to hear the results of your research project.

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: Same here. I want to know too.

STACY BRADY: This is Stacy. I will tell you that most of the states that offer it also collect from wireless. So they have a lot more funding in their accounts.

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: This is April. Any more discussion? Anything related to what Stacy was just talking about?

All right. So it looks like we are on to open discussion.

Do we have anything related to that?

The only thing is that I want to say is that everybody is safe from -- we have been a year now with COVID. We are all

here and safe. I am very optimistic we are close to getting to 21
more of a safe world with the vaccine out.

All right. Anything else that anybody wants to share?

Nope?

Okay.

So this is April. So hopefully we can see more RCC because I am trying to teach my clients to use RCC on their -- for their online courses. And I am trying my best to really get the word out there and talk about services that we offer. And we as VR counselors, we have our own too.

CADY MACFEE: Thank you, April, for promoting for Relay Missouri RCC. That's awesome!

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: The only thing I would like to remind you all of is if you know anybody that is -- can fill in these two replacements, we have a Deaf and hard of hearing one, and we have a speech-impaired position. Both of those are open. So if you know anybody, please send them -- their resume to us and their name to us and -- what's it? What's it called?

Who do I send it to? Who should we send it to, the resume? Who is the contact point for us? Who should they send it to?

WHITNEY PAYNE: I would say Kari is probably the best one to send it to. You are more than welcome to send it to me; this is Whitney.

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: Oh, yes.

I am so sorry. This is April. My brain just shut down for

a minute. Totally froze up.

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Okay. Let's look at the date for our next meeting.

Normally it is somewhere around October; right?

KARI SALSMAN: Yeah, so it would be October. What about Tuesday, October 19th?

STEPHANIE LOGAN: Yes, sounds good with me.

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: How does everybody else feel about Tuesday, October 19th. Everybody fine with that?

What time?

KARI SALSMAN: 10:00 if that works for everybody.

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: Yeah, sure. Are we going to do virtual for now do you think?

KARI SALSMAN: I would say for now plan on virtual, and if something changes, I will get with everybody to confirm the location.

STEPHANIE LOGAN: I agree, virtual. Online for now is good.

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: I am sure we will clear up all of our calendars and make sure that we are all good to go for Tuesday, October 19th at 10:00. Looks good.

All right. So ...

STEPHANIE LOGAN: I say we go ahead and close the meeting.

CADY MACFEE: It is short and sweet.

SPEAKER: But I miss lunch and having food with you guys.

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: Okay. All right. Thank you all so very much for coming today and joining our meeting. It was

great. Looking forward to October 19th at 10:00. See you 23
there. Thanks for your time today. Thanks for the interpreter
too.

Bye, bye.