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Office of Information Technology Telecommunications Access of Maryland

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Governor

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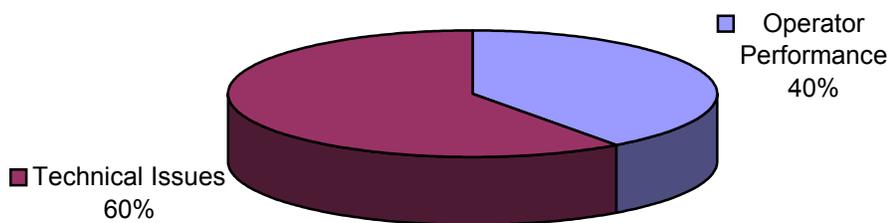
CECILIA JANUSZKIEWICZ
Deputy Secretary

FCC Docket No. 98-67

Maryland Relay Summary Log: June 1, 2003 – May 31, 2004

For the period of June 1, 2003 through May 31, 2004, Maryland Relay processed 1,519,404 calls and received a total of 419 customer complaints. These complaints were filed with supervisors, account managers, AT&T Relay Customer Service, and/or with the State of Maryland's Telecommunications Access of Maryland (agency which oversees the TRS contract with AT&T).

Customer Complaint 2003 - 2004 Reported by State of Maryland



All complaints are recorded in AT&T's Customer Concerns Database. The State of Maryland and AT&T ensure that all complaints registered to a supervisor by phone, email, or by any other means, are entered into the database in a tandem effort for comprehensive data collection.

The discrepancy in the number of complaints recorded by AT&T (Appendix A) and the State of Maryland (Appendix B) can be reconciled by understanding that AT&T files only those complaints that directly refer to a specific regulation in 47 CFR Part 64. The State of Maryland's report includes all



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customer contact, both positive and negative, to provide the FCC more detailed information for their consideration while planning the future direction of TRS (Appendix B). To ensure that customer

concerns are addressed, the State's complaint log documents all issues brought to our attention by a single complaint. Example: If a customer complains that an operator did not follow his/her instruction, typed poorly, disconnected abruptly, all three parts of this complaint would be documented separately by the State of Maryland, registering three complaints instead of one as is true with AT&T's database.

No complaints were filed formally with the FCC during June 2003 – May 2004.

In the 2nd year of the State's contract with AT&T as the Maryland TRS provider, the number of complaints related to operator performance has decreased dramatically from 67% (June 2002 – May 2003) to 40% (June 2003 – May 2004). During this same time frame, the number of complaints related to technical issues has increased from 33% to 60% during the respective time periods.

The State of Maryland's RFP requirement for upgraded switch technology led to the Maryland Relay's installation of the most sophisticated switch currently being used for TRS. However, the functionally equivalent capabilities this switch provides are still causing some confusion. Moreover, the State feels that the functional equivalence currently provided by this technology, and the ability to provide future ANI-based telephony products that are, and will be, available to standard phone users is imperative. Maryland Relay's commitment to outreach dedicated to the education of Relay users regarding standard telephony will continue to ensure that TRS users will have the availability of standard telephony services. The State continues to provide features for functional equivalency as well as educate the user communities. These features include:

- Receiving the number of the person calling
- Passing Caller-ID blocking information established at the originating number
- Transmission of the originating number to emergency facilities (9-1-1)

Maryland Relay continues its outreach to broaden awareness through education in an effort to lessen user confusion.

During the past year, Maryland Relay refocused on its Relay Partner Program. We are educating businesses on the benefits of using Relay, providing newly developed training materials, and informing those who want to block all Relay calls of the FCC Public Notice on Internet Protocol Relay. We are also educating Relay users on ways to make smoother and quicker Relay calls and encouraging them to use Relay Partners when searching for a new business.

The State of Maryland, Telecommunications Access of Maryland (TAM), is aware that some complaints are anecdotal in nature and/or the provider may not have recorded them. This may have occurred because the complaints did not include all of the required associated data. In addition, the State understands that not all consumers possess the time or awareness of procedures to file formal complaints. For the period covered by this report, the State of Maryland has again hired an outside consultant to test and evaluate service in order to proactively identify any unreported problems or anomalies related to the Maryland Relay. During the June 2003 - May 2004 reporting period, three separate quality assurance tests were conducted to assess the new TRS provider.

FCC Complaint Summary Log

Following both testing/evaluation periods and corresponding reports, the following corrective measures were taken:

- The State received Performance Improvement Plans from AT&T.
- The State worked with AT&T to develop in-depth, advanced training for operators on Deaf awareness, issues related to hard of hearing users, issues related to speech disabilities, and methods to relate the newly acquired information to their jobs.

To ensure better resolution of customer concerns received by any venue, Maryland Relay, through a joint effort between the TAM office and the AT&T Relay Center team, has:

- established an outstanding 24/7 in-center customer service team;
- implemented additional training for operators to include user input and personal perspectives;
- required all operators to participate in a minimum of one Maryland Relay related community event;
- developed performance improvement plans based on the results of the independent evaluation/testing;
- made conference rooms in the Relay Center available to various user communities for their meetings to encourage interaction between Relay personnel and the user community;
- user group discussions to obtain consumer feedback;
- attended various events in the diverse user communities. (This effort was made to inform consumers of new procedures, and to explain the improvement afforded with the new technology);
- encouraged and solicited customer feedback and registration of concerns to allow for development of resolutions;

In summary, Maryland Relay received fewer complaints per call this year than last year, as the relay operators became more skilled in processing calls. The State of Maryland is proud of the outstanding AT&T customer service team. The team is available 24/7 and provides superior customer service by thinking “outside the box” and making customer service their priority even if the problem is not directly an AT&T Relay issue. The Maryland Customer Service Team is a model for TRS customer service. It is the opinion of Maryland Relay that our public relations/advertising/outreach efforts make us a leader in the TRS industry. These activities include such proactive methods as soliciting customer feedback by traditional and non-traditional means and utilizing active customer interaction. These efforts will continue to aid us in identifying and resolving issues, which will in turn lead to a greater understanding and appreciation of the more functionally equivalent TRS available with Maryland Relay.

We will continue to educate users and assist customers, focusing on information we have learned from them. We are working with the provider and the community to educate new operators in their skills and awareness of the user communities. We seek to increase user community knowledge of Maryland Relay and build relationships that are open and sharing among them, the provider, the State and the FCC.

The requirements contained within the Maryland Relay contract have once again raised the bar for TRS. These noticeable changes keep Maryland at the forefront of TRS quality of service, functional equivalency, and leading edge technology. As always, Maryland Relay strives to provide the citizens of Maryland not only the best relay service, the most technical functional equivalent relay available, but also a customer service team that is available and ready to work with the customers in our efforts to provide them with a high degree of satisfaction and more functionally equivalent phone service.

Respectfully submitted,

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