

**Telecommunications Access Program (TAP) Advisory Board Meeting**  
**April 11, 2013 @ 2pm**  
**KCDHH Conference Room**

**Members Present:** Ms. Betty Timon, Mr. Jeremiah Ziehr, Mr. Johnny Lawson, Mr. Forest Skaggs and Mr. Jim Stevens

**Members Absent:** Ms. Becky Crawford, Ms. Nina Coyer, Ms. Mindy McGirt and Mr. Lewis Fowler

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

**Visitors:** Mr. Bob Stuckey and Ms. Lisa Harris

**Communication Facilitators:** Ms. Shannon Grider and Ms. Audrey Lambert

Ms. Betty Timon, acting Chair, called the meeting to order at 2:00 pm. Ms. Wright completed the roll call, and as four members were absent there was not a quorum for this meeting. Ms. Moore explained it is permissible to have discussions, but no items can be voted on without a quorum. Minutes from the April 2012 meeting were reviewed and accepted as they have already been approved by the full Commission Board.

Ms. Moore, KCDHH Executive Director provided an update in the wireless portion of the Telecommunications Access Program (TAP) within KCDHH. Consumers that received devices at the beginning of the pilot have been transitioning to their own accounts. There were some challenges at first, as stores were unfamiliar with our applicants and confused our program with a program AT&T has called TAP as well. Each store is unique and KCDHH staff has provided assistance on an individual basis as needed, and streamlined the process, with almost 1,200 consumers transitioning to their own accounts. AT&T continues to notify stores of the process and assist with some of the transitions to familiarize each store with how to deal with consumers, but it has been time consuming for staff to deal with these ongoing problems for the last eighteen months. In an attempt to streamline this process KCDHH and AT&T have been in discussion about revising the way the program works through TAP. A decision was made to implement a new version of the wireless distribution, where customers will be placed in a pool plan. Each customer will have service for 12 months and in the 11<sup>th</sup> month they are notified that their service is expiring and it is time to transfer to their own account. This will resolve a lot of the billing issues staff are dealing with, but consumers will still be monitored for overages and notified if they exceed the monthly expenditure limits. If they do not resume normal usage they will be warned they will be disconnected the next time an overage occurs. On the third time, the customer's service is cut off and they must establish their own account at that time to continue utilizing the phone. This

new plan began with our last equipment order, and there are about 300 current consumers left to transition off the old plan. With the new plan, AT&T will assign a specific person to our account who will work with our staff to resolve all problems, including transitions involving the National Office, to ensure that our customers are served by the specific stores as well as by phone or email. AT&T has promised to educate all of their employees that deal with wireless customers again on how to provide adequate customer service to someone with a hearing loss. Board members were given the opportunity to ask questions about the new plan and voice any concerns with the wireless program.

Ms. Holloway reported on upcoming TAP outreach plans, and advised that Mr. Zulauf and Ms. Wright will be making more one-on-one contacts with a variety of groups including senior citizen groups and centers, audiologists, hearing instrument specialists, speech language pathologists, health departments, doctor's offices and local businesses when outreach is done in a particular area of the state. The KCDHH PR department is also working on a mail out to professionals statewide who were contacted and indicated their willingness to display the new table top display and poster in their offices. These pieces include a card that can be mailed into our office to request a TAP application, or any additional information needed from KCDHH. Members were asked to suggest additional places that these displays might be placed across the state, and suggestions were provided.

Mr. Zulauf gave an update on applications processed and equipment chosen by consumers since the last board meeting in October 2012 and explained that we are now tracking where referrals come from on the database. As Sprint is currently running an ad for CapTel in Kentucky we have seen a substantial increase in requests for that piece of equipment. 162 people have reported being referred due to that ad in particular, making the campaign a great success. TAP is also being advertised on KCDHH's Facebook page and 35 referrals have come from that addition. A total of 467 requests for applications have been received in this timeframe, with sources including, ads, friends, outreach, newsletter, professional website, Facebook, or other. Wireless devices lead with the most requests, with cordless phones second and CapTel third. Members were given statistics and provided with an opportunity to ask questions.

Ms. Wright reported on the TAP demonstration cabinets throughout the state and announced that a seventh cabinet had been placed in Pikeville and an eighth is anticipated to be placed in Murray soon. Ms. Wright contacts the site coordinators monthly to ask if any assistance is needed and if potential customers are testing the phones. Cabinets are updated as equipment changes and typically an on-site visit is made to ensure the employees at the site know how to demonstrate the new device.

Ms. Danielson, Sprint representative, introduced the two state outreach coordinators and reported that they have been partnering with KCDHH to ensure all outreach opportunities are covered. She also announced that they have launched a trial of Sprint wireless devices and five consumers are currently testing the devices for ease of use, accessibility and coverage around the state. If results are positive, Sprint would like to

opportunity to provide wireless devices for the TAP rather than AT&T. Members were given the opportunity to ask questions of Ms. Danielson.

During the open forum, Ms. Moore reported that AT&T has been working with Indiana on an application for wireless devices that would assist in providing emergency information to consumers. KCDHH is considering designing our own application that could be downloaded to accomplish this goal, or to transmit other vital information. Ms. Moore announced that we are considering adding the iPad as a part of the TAP and would consider adding this feature to that device. New Mexico has piloted an iPad distribution program and we are waiting on input from them and the potential vendors before considering addition of the iPad to TAP. However, if added it would serve all disabilities, would have apps specifically designed for that disability preloaded, and could be tracked so that consumers could not sell the device without our knowledge, in which case it would be locked down. Service would be through wifi or at the consumer's expense, as only the device would be provided by TAP. We would install preloaded applications and some of those for speech impaired or deaf blind individuals can be expensive, but this is a way for us to reach those underserved populations.

Ms. Holloway advised of the Board members whose terms are expiring and indicated that all three had agreed to continue to serve another term. As the Board cannot vote on this until the next meeting due to the lack of a quorum, terms will continue by default.

As there were no other topics for discussion, the members were reminded to turn in their travel vouchers to Ms. Wright. The next TAP Advisory Board meeting will be held at KCDHH on **October, 10 2013** at 2:00 pm and the spring meeting will be held **April 10, 2014**. Members are highly encouraged to attend so that business can be conducted as scheduled. The meeting was adjourned at 3:25 pm.