



**GOVERNOR'S ADVISORY BOARD FOR
TELECOMMUNICATIONS RELAY**

MARTIN O'MALLEY
Governor

ANTHONY BROWN
Lieutenant Governor

MITCHELL D. TRAVERS
Chair

January 2, 2008

The Honorable Thomas V. Mike Miller, Jr., President
Senate of Maryland
H-107, State House
State Circle
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

The Honorable Michael E. Busch, Speaker
House of Delegates
H-101, State House
State Circle
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

Dear President Miller and Speaker Busch:

I am pleased to submit the annual Governor's Advisory Board for Telecommunications Relay (GABTR) report for calendar year 2007, as required by § 3-804(d) of the State Finance and Procurement Article.

In February, 2007, the State of Maryland Board of Public Works awarded Hamilton Relay a five year contract for the provision of the Telecommunications Relay Services (TRS) in Maryland. Hamilton began the contract on June 1, 2007, at the newly established Relay Center in Frostburg, Maryland.

In March, 2007, the State of Maryland Board of Public Works awarded Hamilton Relay a five year contract for the provision of Maryland's new Captioned Telephone Service. This service is ideal for people with hearing loss who would benefit from captioning of their calls and who have understandable speech. With this new State program, captioned telephone users are able to talk and listen on the phone, while simultaneously reading the captioned text on the captioned telephone's screen.

The Maryland Accessible Telecommunications (MAT) program continues to meet the needs of financially qualified citizens who require specialized consumer premises equipment to make traditional telephone calls. The distribution program provides free amplified phones, ring

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signalers, captioned telephones, text telephones (TTYs), and other assistive devices to persons who are deaf, hard of hearing, DeafBlind, speech or mobility disabled. MAT customers receive free assessments at any of six independent evaluation centers throughout the State to ensure that the appropriate equipment is provided.

TAM's interest in public safety remains at the forefront, with regular participation in emergency preparedness drills and workshops. In addition to its involvement in State and local training, Maryland Relay staff educates the public on these topics as they relate to the Maryland Relay users. Training and information sessions are conducted by TAM to assist 9-1-1 centers with compliance issues related to 9-1-1 services for Relay users in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

This year, in partnership with State and local efforts, Maryland Relay assisted in the duplication and distribution of the Baltimore County Fire Department's production of a DVD called, 'Working With People With Disabilities.' A tool for firefighters, emergency medical personnel and other first responders on how to respond to and treat persons who have disabilities, Maryland Relay sponsored the captioning of the video and distributed it to more than 1,200 agencies and organizations nationwide, including Canada, Puerto Rico, Guam and Africa. Among those now using this new resource are professionals in the fields of fire and rescue, emergency management, law enforcement, health and education, as well as advocacy and volunteer groups.

In an ongoing effort to ensure that the relay center service provider meets or exceeds the goals of the TRS contract, independent contractors conducted quarterly quality assurance audits. The results showed that Maryland Relay continued to exceed the federal requirement of answering 85 percent of all incoming calls within 10 seconds.

Sincerely,

Mitchell D. Travers
Chair

cc: The Honorable T. Eloise Foster, Secretary, DBM
Mr. Elliot H. Schlanger, Chief of Information Technology, DBM
Mr. Simon Powell, Policy Analyst, DLS